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Foreword

By **Barrie Richardson**

You are about to read a unique work. This book differs from other books on mentalism and magic in four ways.

First of all, there are only a few books out of the thousands published that are focused on detailed descriptions of commercial acts that have been proven to be successful for corporate events.

Second, in this book Chuck Hickok not only describes the act in great detail, but he also reviews all the small details that professionals are most concerned with if they are to consistently deliver a quality performance.

Quality is not an accident. Chuck Hickok pinpoints every step, both large and small. For example, he discusses selecting and choosing presentations that are appropriate for your audience and that are also in harmony with your own values and persona. This is rarely discussed in books on mentalism. I have never read a book that takes time to explain the importance of such things as the size of props used and the significance of physical positioning of the

participants on the platform. He does not just make his points; he spells them out in practical and precise fashion.

The third way that the book differs—in many ways as valuable as the routines he outlines—is in his early chapters on presentation and showmanship. This material could stand alone, and the advice he gives is relevant and immensely helpful to anyone who is going to make a public presentation, whether he or she uses mental stunts or not.

The fourth way this book differs from traditional books on mentalism is that the act Chuck Hickok describes is not just a series of “modest mental miracles,” but rather a presentation that has a message. The effects become ways to deepen the points he wants to communicate, and he does this with good humor and no intimation that he has paranormal powers. Rather, he and everyone in attendance are, for 45 minutes, celebrating the astonishing mental capacities that we all have.

Who is Chuck Hickok? Why is he an authority in this area?

Chuck Hickok has for over 25 years been a professional trainer and developer of leaders for organizations, both public and private. He is a skilled and charming platform speaker. The first time I saw him perform several years ago at a PEA convention, I recall thinking to myself, only three minutes into his program, that Chuck Hickok did not need any magical or mental demonstrations. His vitality, wit, and happy demeanor, along with his ability to communicate ideas with earnestness, made me want to listen and learn. I immediately thought I would like to know this man better.

My first impressions were correct.

This is a book for people who want to learn how to present a program that will inspire, entertain, and generate happy customers.

Barrie Richardson

August 2002

Introduction

The purpose of this book is to advance the art of mentalism by sharing with you my complete corporate mentalism act.

I define **mentalism** as a form of entertainment in which the performer creates the illusion of extraordinary cognitive or mental abilities, such as performing rapid mathematical calculations, remembering every page in a magazine, influencing another person's choices, discerning a person's thoughts, moving an object by thought alone, and accurately predicting upcoming events.

While there are many fine books of mental effects, there are very few books that describe a complete mentalism act for corporate audiences. In this book, you will learn **what** routines I perform in my corporate act. More importantly, you will learn **why** I perform my act the way I do. You will also receive my **full presentations** for each routine in my corporate act.

I'm more of an "enhancer" than a "creator." I enjoy taking the methods and ideas of other people and reshaping them to fit my style of performing. Most everything in this book can be traced back to an effect or routine that made a strong impression on me over the past 20 years.

Mentalism is a form of entertainment that works with many different performing styles. I call my style of performing **Light Mentalism**. I introduce my corporate audiences to “the untapped powers of the human mind.” My demonstrations focus on mental abilities that most people believe could be real. My presentation is written to be fun and informative.

I perform **Light Mentalism** because it fits my personality perfectly. I enjoy telling stories and thinking on my feet. I enjoy involving audience members in my demonstrations. I enjoy laughter. I enjoy making every demonstration not only amazing but also fun. In many ways, **Light Mentalism** lets my audiences see the real me.

I am uncomfortable with Q & A routines and cold readings. Because of poor eyesight, I also stay away from blindfold routines. While other mentalists excel at these classics of mentalism, I am more comfortable with demonstrations that are more believable and that match my personality.

Regardless of your performing style or experience level, I hope the ideas in this book help you gain a better understanding of performing mentalism for corporate audiences.

Chapter One

My Journey Toward Performing

To help you appreciate the ideas and routines in this book, it might be helpful for you to understand how I became a professional mentalist. Unlike many people, I began performing professionally much later in life.

In fact, I became interested in magic much later than most. I bought my first book of card effects at age 35. Within a year, I was taking close-up classes from Al Schneider, inventor of the coin magic classic, “Matrix.” Al was not only a very creative magician, but a wonderful teacher as well. Al challenged me to think about every aspect of a magic routine. Within a short period of time, I began experimenting with all the standard props (ropes, coins, cards, etc.) used by close-up performers. By age 40, I was a fairly competent amateur close-up performer.

About that time, I performed my first mentalism effect: Dick Barry’s “Clairvoyant Cassette.” (An ungaffed

audio cassette player is shown. A person mentally selects any playing card. When the cassette is played, the audience hears the performer's voice name the selected card.) I immediately noticed the strong impact this effect had on people. I quickly began learning as much as I possibly could about mentalism.

I eventually asked myself, "What causes mentalism to have such a strong impact on people?" The best answer I came up with is that many people **believed** that what they saw me do was real. Some people **actually believed** I had used my special mental abilities to make things happen.

This reaction was different from what I experienced when performing close-up magic. For example, when I performed "Matrix," I talked about making the coins move invisibly from one location to another. "Matrix" is a very strong routine. The sleights are undetectable. People were amazed. But, when "Matrix" was over, very few people believed I had the ability to make the coins move invisibly. Even if they were entertained and amazed, most left believing that what they had witnessed was sleight of hand or other deception. Less than one percent of the people left wondering, "How did he make the coins become invisible?"

Compare that experience with this simple demonstration of telepathy. I begin by talking about the possibility of mind-to-mind communication. I then ask a person to send me telepathically the name of a good friend. When I correctly announce the friend's name, some people watching this demonstration **will believe** that mind-to-mind communication has occurred. Certainly, not everyone will believe. A few people will always suspect deception or sleight of hand whenever they watch mentalism. But some people

will leave wondering, "How in the world did he read that person's thoughts?"

Creating this belief within people became more stimulating for me than performing close-up magic. I'm not saying mentalism is more entertaining than close-up magic. Both can be very entertaining. There are audiences for both. I still enjoy performing both. But I find performing mentalism much more challenging and exciting.

In 1989, I was accepted into the Psychic Entertainers Association, a worldwide organization of over 300 people who have a passion for mentalism. Many of the demonstrations in this book were inspired by materials and routines created by PEA members. More importantly, the help and support I received from my friends in the PEA gave me the confidence to begin performing professionally.

In 1995, at the tender age of 52, I did my first paid corporate mentalism show. It's hard to describe how excited I felt after that first show. I fulfilled one of my personal dreams. Imagine, getting paid to amaze people!

With one show under my belt, I began marketing myself to organizations as a Corporate Entertainer (not a mentalist). Most of my work now comes from contacting Meeting Planners and Human Resource Directors, and promising to make their events and meetings more fun, memorable, and amazing.

Since 1995, I've presented over 300 shows for organizations of all sizes. These shows gave me numerous opportunities to discover what routines worked best for me, and what routines worked best for corporate audiences. More

importantly, I also learned what routines didn't create the reactions I hoped for.

These shows helped me to fine-tune my own unique style for performing mentalism. I discovered that I'm more comfortable with a lighter, more conservative approach to exploring the untapped powers of the human mind.

The act described in this book is almost completely different from the first act I presented in 1995. Only the book test remains.

Will my corporate act change much in the next three years? I don't believe it will. Why not? These demonstrations work very well for me. Together they create a very strong impression on corporate audiences. Yet I constantly search for new ways to make my act more fun and entertaining.

Again, I sincerely hope the ideas and routines in this book help you more effectively present mentalism to corporate audiences.

Chapter Two

Entertainment and Mentalism for Corporate Audiences

I view myself as a corporate entertainer who specializes in mentalism. My main mission is to entertain people. Mentalism is my means to this end.

What follows are questions I reviewed as I developed my corporate mentalism act. The answers presented are based on my own experiences over the past seven years.

Why do corporations hire an entertainer for events?

Entertainers are hired to take people's thoughts away from their everyday worries and concerns, and offer them an experience that is relaxing, fun, and enjoyable. Entertainment is often added to an event as a way of rewarding or thanking people. Entertainers are hired to make events special or memorable. My clients want their employees and guests to say, "That was fun" or "That was great" when my act is over. Therefore, as an entertainer, I constantly look for ways to make my act enjoyable and fun.

Why do corporations hire a mentalist? Here are four reasons why I believe mentalists are hired for an event or meeting, rather than other types of entertainers:

- Mentalism is amazing and unexplainable.
- Mentalism, when done well, is fascinating to watch.
- Mentalism allows audience members to share the spotlight.
- Mentalism is a form of entertainment that few people have seen.

My clients also want their employees and guests to say, "That was different and amazing" when my act is over. Therefore, I strive to make every routine in my act interesting to watch and also as strong as possible.

I remind myself that **I'm an entertainer first... and a mentalist second**. I want people to relax and enjoy each demonstration. I avoid the temptation to show off. I want each demonstration to be more than a puzzle to figure out. I want people to laugh. And I want people to leave amazed.

Achieving all of these outcomes is hard work. Achieving these outcomes takes more than a collection of books about mentalism. I suspect many people reading this book already are familiar with enough mentalism effects to perform several mentalism shows.

I strongly encourage anyone who wants to perform mentalism for corporations to acquire a basic understanding of theater, comedy, public speaking, and communications. Applying ideas and insights from these allied disciplines will make your performance of mentalism more appealing and entertaining.

What kinds of events do corporations bring in a mentalist to entertain? I have been hired to perform at

- Recognition and award dinners
- Communications meetings
- Celebrations of individual, department, and company achievements
- Seasonal parties for employees
- Meetings and dinners for clients and suppliers
- Training conferences and meetings

Each of these events has a slightly different purpose. Often, I will be asked to emphasize or reinforce the purpose of the event during my performance. I accomplish this by modifying my presentation or patter to include and reinforce the purpose of the event.

Ninety percent of the time, I am the only entertainer at an event. I am asked to perform for a specific period of time, ranging from 20 to 60 minutes.

It is absolutely critical to honor this time commitment strictly. Often, my act is part of a longer program that may also involve short talks by company officials and the presentation of awards or gifts. If I perform for 40 minutes when I've been hired to perform for 25 minutes, I will anger most of my clients. I always double-check the length of time I am to perform when I arrive at the event.

What is the size of a typical corporate audience? While mentalists can be hired to present mentalism to small groups of people (close-up mentalism), I am hired to present my act to everyone at the event.

Audiences range from 20 to 400 people. Many of my corporate audiences are around 100 people. Audience members are normally employees or guests of my clients. Some guests may be valued customers. Other guests may be important business partners or suppliers.

It is critical to select (and modify) each demonstration so that everyone in the audience can understand, follow, and appreciate what is being presented.

What does the typical corporate audience expect from a mentalist? Most people don't know what to expect from a mentalist. Few people have seen a mentalist perform a complete show. This gives mentalists a great deal of freedom to create acts that match their performing styles and skill levels.

A mentalist must select demonstrations that can be presented with **conviction** and **excitement**. The more comfortable you are with each demonstration in your corporate act, the higher your chances of success as an entertainer. I have created an act that takes advantage of my public speaking and training background. And I've selected demonstrations that are more believable because I can present them convincingly. Other mentalists present demonstrations that are stronger or more unbelievable than mine. There are opportunities for demonstrations of varying impossibility or impact. But, as you plan your corporate act, balance the impact (or amazement value) of each demonstration with its entertainment value.

Remember, corporate audiences expect whatever is presented to be interesting, fun, and fast-paced. They want an act that is enjoyable and amazing. Corporate audiences

will become restless if a mentalism act is slow, boring, or too predictable.

Can a mentalist influence the audience's expectations before the act starts? Yes. I ask my clients to list or advertise me in their program as an "Entertainer" or "Corporate Entertainer." More importantly, I give my clients the following description to use in their publicity: "Chuck Hickok has traveled the world, helping people better understand and use the untapped powers of the human mind. You will be surprised and amazed by what you see and hear during this unique entertainment experience." Ninety percent of the time, audience members are exposed to this description before I perform.

This description tells my audience that my act will be fun and different. Yet it still leaves them wondering what specifically will happen. This is deliberate. I want people guessing what will happen when I walk on stage.

Remember, I am trying to shape audience expectations. I also don't want people worried or concerned **before** I start. Therefore, I avoid using the words "psychic," "ESP," or "mind-reader." I believe these words may cause apprehension in the minds of some audience members. I also don't use "mentalist" because most audience members have never heard this term.

My self-description works for me. It matches my style and my show. Yet I know this description isn't appropriate for every mentalist.

Remember: Since most audience don't know what to expect of a mentalist, consider putting together a brief, clear description of you and your act that tells your audience

what to expect. Then, encourage your clients to use this description when promoting you and your show.

What do corporations expect of a mentalist beyond a great show? Here are a few other things I've discovered my clients also expect of me:

Be Prepared	Clients expect me to confirm all details in writing and to arrive early enough to be ready to perform well before I'm scheduled to start.
Be Flexible	Clients expect me to shorten or lengthen my act as their schedule changes.
Be Approachable	Clients expect me to mingle and talk with people before and after my act. If I'm asked what I do, I say, "It's a surprise, but I think you will be amazed." I do not perform any close-up mentalism before or after my act.
Work Clean	Profanity doesn't go over well at most corporate events. Personally, I avoid sexual and political humor.
Work Safe	Clients don't want material that is shocking or controversial, or that makes fun of people.
Work Fast	Clients don't want their people becoming restless because a routine is too long or complex.

How do you develop new material for your corporate act? When considering a new demonstration for my corporate act, I go through a two-step process.

The first step involves seeking out feedback from knowledgeable peers. To be a successful corporate mentalist, a performer must be open to feedback from others. In 1990, I put together a group of "fans of mentalism" in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area called the Minnesota MindPsi. We meet monthly to discuss and perform mentalism.

What makes their feedback invaluable to me is that these people understand my style of mentalism. They have all seen my corporate act. They have a solid knowledge of mentalism. And a few are full-time entertainers. So when someone says, "That sucks," or "That isn't you," or "You can do better," his or her feedback means something to me. It's frustrating to receive this kind of feedback. But in the long run it has helped me develop new material faster.

The second step involves evaluating a live audience's reactions. It often takes me between three and ten performances to determine whether a new demonstration complements and strengthens my act. Many times, I discover I can perform the demonstration effectively, but the demonstration just doesn't generate the audience reaction I had hoped for. Either it isn't as strong as I wanted or it isn't as entertaining as I thought it would be. In the last five years, I have put aside over twenty demonstrations that seemed entertaining to me but failed the "live audience" test.

Evaluating my impact on an audience is a very subjective process. Being honest with myself is difficult for me... particularly when it involves being honest about something

I created or developed. However, the more I perform for people, the easier it becomes for me to honestly gauge the impact of a new demonstration on an audience.

Free shows are a wonderful testing ground for new material. I believe in the mission and purposes of our local United Way. Each year, I appear 20–30 times as a United Way spokesman. At these events, I review the mission of the United Way and also present a few quick demonstrations of mentalism.

I consider myself to have truly mastered a new demonstration when I have discovered all the mistakes a person could possibly make. The first time I do a new demonstration isn't normally my best effort. But by my fifteenth attempt, I normally have made most of my mistakes. These free shows have been a safe (low-risk) place for me to learn from my own mistakes.

These free shows are a win-win situation for everyone. The United Way gets the services of a professional entertainer to support its fundraising. And these shows help me grow and develop faster as a corporate entertainer.

How do you get started doing free shows? Identify a cause you believe in. Meet with the local executives. Explain how you, as an entertainer, can make their events more fun, at no cost to them. This works best with organizations that need you for multiple appearances.

How does a mentalist get hired by corporations? I am not an expert at marketing myself as an entertainer. Most of my work comes as the result of contacting corporations directly. I contact their Meeting Planners or Human Resource professionals.

For me, marketing is the hardest part of being a corporate entertainer. Professionally designed marketing materials are very helpful. Most potential clients will expect to receive a promotional kit with a video and letters of recommendation.

I strongly recommend the marketing materials by Randy Charach and David Dee, in the "Books and Supplies" section in the back of this book, for practical suggestions on marketing mentalism to corporations.

In addition, I have watched many of the best mentalists present their acts. More importantly, I've had the opportunities to talk with the performers about the **thinking behind their acts** as well as how and why they selected **their style of performing**.

Also, for over thirty years, I have given presentations to corporate audiences of all sizes on the topics of communications, leadership, and living your dreams. These experiences have helped me understand what it takes to communicate with a corporate audience.

Reflecting on these experiences, the first thing I discovered about performing entertaining mentalism for corporate audiences is that **there are no absolutes**. That is, there are no guidelines or principles that apply to every performing situation or every mentalist. In the end, each performer must carefully decide how he or she will present mentalism to a corporate audience.

Given that disclaimer, in the next few pages I present the guidelines I've developed for planning and performing an entertaining corporate mentalism act. These guidelines represent those ideas that **work best for me**. These guidelines have helped me entertain **corporate audiences** of all sizes.

Understanding these guidelines will help you better understand **why** I perform my act the way I do. These guidelines are also presented to get you thinking about how you are currently performing your mentalism act.

I suspect that you may disagree with a few of these guidelines. Remember, I said there are no absolutes. But before you dismiss a guideline, I encourage you to re-read

the guideline completely and then think very carefully about **why you disagree**.

If your disagreement is driven by your desire to continue performing your act "the way you've always done it," your act might be improved by making a few simple changes. I encourage you to keep an open mind as you think about each guideline.

At the end of each guideline, I offer one or more self-assessment questions. These questions are designed to help you determine the extent to which you are applying each guideline in your current act. I hope that reviewing these questions will help you discover specific changes you can make to become a better entertainer and mentalist.

These guidelines are presented in no particular order. I view each as equally important to creating and performing entertaining mentalism for corporate audiences.

Guideline One: A Unifying Theme

For a mentalism act to capture the attention of a corporate audience, there should be a unifying theme that connects or links together the demonstrations in the act. The unifying theme becomes the foundation that the act is built upon. It may involve an interesting story or an overview of what the audience can expect. The audience should be introduced to this theme near the start of the act.

My act begins with a brief story about a book my grandfather gave me on my tenth birthday. The book focuses on the mental abilities of Joseph Dunninger. Each demonstra-

Chapter Three

Eight Guidelines for Performing Mentalism to Corporate Audiences

Note: In this book, I will use the word **act** to describe a series of demonstrations with a common theme. My corporate mentalism act has between three and six demonstrations depending on the amount of time I'm given. (By the way, I use the word **demonstration** in this book the way others use the words *effect*, *experiment*, or *routine*. This book describes nine demonstrations that I have performed for corporate audiences.)

Almost everything I do in my corporate act is based on a set of core beliefs.

My core beliefs about performing mentalism for corporate audiences come from over twenty years' experience as a fan of mentalism, as well as my own experiences as a performer.

tion in my act involves a specific mental ability I learned from reading the Dunninger book.

Like most good stories, part of my story is real, part fiction.

Yet everything in my act is built around this story. As I begin each demonstration in my act, I talk about Dunninger, his abilities, and what I learned from reading the book given to me by my grandfather on my tenth birthday.

This story makes my act more than a collection of random demonstrations. It allows me to present an act that has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Interestingly, less than ten percent of my audience members recognize Dunninger's name. In some ways, that gives me more freedom to be creative in my stories about him.

Quick Check:

- What theme runs through your act?
- When is your theme communicated to your audience?
- Is your theme interesting or appealing to your typical audience?

Guideline Two: Believability

For a corporate mentalism act to hold the audience's attention, each demonstration should deal with a believable mental ability. In most cases, audience members al-

ready believe. That is, most people believe the human mind has untapped abilities. In addition, many people believe they have had a "psychic experience" at some point in their lives. The mentalist is responsible for connecting with and building upon these existing beliefs.

This is mentalism's advantage over magic. Magic is **too incredible**. People just don't believe that coins can move invisibly from one location to another. Corporate audiences may marvel at a magician's skill, but most audience members realize that they are witnessing a demonstration of misdirection and manipulation.

On the other hand, most people accept the existence of **extraordinary mental abilities** such as enhanced memory, intuition, telepathy, and clairvoyance. Corporate audiences might not use these exact terms, but most people believe that some untapped mental abilities exist.

As I present my corporate act, I build upon those beliefs. At the start of each demonstration, I introduce my audience to the next mental ability I will explore. I try to be clear and specific in my explanation so the audience knows what to expect. And I tie each demonstration back to my unifying theme.

In *The Art of Mentalism*, Bob Cassidy suggests, "Don't claim too much." To remain believable, a mentalist may be better off demonstrating perhaps three to five mental abilities during an act. Less may be more convincing than more.

The mental abilities I demonstrate in my 45-minute corporate act are:

- Enhanced mathematical ability
- Psychological persuasion, or mentally influencing people's choices
- People-reading skills
- Telepathy, or thought reading
- Precognition, or the ability to forecast future outcomes

Each of these is a mental ability that some audience members already accept as real. Of course, some abilities are more believable than others.

Quick Check:

- What mental abilities do you demonstrate in your act?
- How believable (or unbelievable) is each demonstration?
- To what extent do you introduce or explain each mental ability before you demonstrate it?
- Is your explanation of each ability as clear and complete as necessary?

Guideline Three: Exclusivity

For a demonstration to be easy to understand and follow, it should focus on a **single mental ability**. Don't confuse an audience by displaying two different mental abilities in the same demonstration.

Here, I suspect, you and I may initially disagree. In fact, for many years, I ignored this guideline and performed demonstrations that displayed two or more different mental abilities.

But consider this example: The mentalist begins a discussion about telepathy or the ability to read thoughts. A stack of postcards is given to an audience member. That person is asked to look at any postcard and remember the scene on the postcard. The process is repeated with two other people; each person selects and remembers a scene. Each of the three people is asked to concentrate on his or her scene. The mentalist, demonstrating his ability to read thoughts, accurately describes two of the scenes.

Now, what does the mentalist do with the third scene?

The mentalist could point to an envelope that has been in plain sight since the start of the show. Someone from the audience opens the envelope. Inside the envelope is a prediction that describes the third and final scene. This is very strong.

Or the mentalist could ask the remaining person to concentrate as did the others. Then the mentalist could describe the final scene using his or her thought-reading abilities.

In my corporate act, I believe using my thought-reading abilities to reveal the final scene is the **more logical and less confusing way** to end this demonstration. People expect that they are watching a demonstration of telepathy. I finish by giving them what they expect.

And I save any predictions for my prediction demonstration.

Exception: These are guidelines for building or planning a corporate act. If I were asked to “do just one thing” in a variety show, I might be tempted to construct a demonstration (or routine) that displays more than one mental ability.

Quick Check:

- How many of your demonstrations focus on a single mental ability?
- Which demonstrations focus on two or more different abilities?

Guideline Four: Increasing Impossibility

To hold people’s interests during a corporate act, each demonstrated ability should be increasingly more difficult to believe.

My inspiration for this guideline is Pascal de Clemont’s *Pyramid of Believability*. Pascal suggests starting an act with a demonstration that is very believable. Make each following demonstration just a little bit more unbelievable.

End with your most unbelievable demonstration. This clever approach for organizing an act has worked very well for me with corporate audiences.

This guideline is closely related to Guideline Three, Exclusivity. By displaying just one mental ability in each demonstration, I am able to increase the impossibility of my demonstrations by increments.

What mental abilities are believable? What mental abilities are unbelievable? Again, there are no absolutes. Each audience member will have his or her own belief system. Combining Pascal’s perspective with my own experiences, here is one ranking of the many mental abilities a mentalist could display (listed alphabetically within each level):

Level One (Most people believe these mental abilities exist and can be learned or developed.)

- Enhanced mathematical abilities
- Enhanced memory skills
- People-reading skills, or truth detection
- Psychological persuasion, or mentally influencing people’s choices

Level Two (Some people believe that these abilities exist and may be possible to learn or develop.)

- Aura reading, or other kinds of reading
- Clairvoyance or intuition
- Psychometry
- Telepathy, or reading other people’s thoughts

Level Three (Most people have doubts that these mental abilities exist.)

- Precognition, or the ability to consistently predict future outcomes
- Remote viewing
- Q & A demonstrations
- Telekinesis / metal bending
- Sightless vision

Believable doesn't mean boring! I have seen many mentalists amaze corporate audiences with demonstrations of Level One abilities. In fact, I believe it's the mentalist's responsibility to make each demonstration **interesting** and **amazing**.

My corporate act begins with a rapid mathematical demonstration ("Einstein's Demise"). I use the simplest math to accomplish this fast-paced, stunning demonstration. People actually believe I have trained my mind to do rapid math.

But the hardest part of creating and performing this opening demonstration was discovering different ways to make it fun and entertaining to watch. I experimented for months to discover the right mix of humor and mathematics.

As each demonstration becomes slightly more unbelievable, it is important for the mentalist to display **excitement** when it is successful. Remember that most of what we do as mentalists, if done well, should be **amazing** to our audiences. Yet, when I'm performing a demonstration for the three-hundredth time, I occasionally forget to display genuine excitement when it succeeds.

I wish I knew more about acting and drama. I believe more theater training would make me a better entertainer. Currently, to prepare to play the role of a mentalist, I often think about how I would act if I really could read minds or predict the future. Damn, that would be exciting! I have a Post-It note in my carrying case that reads "Show Amazement," to constantly remind myself of this critical point about entertaining people.

Quick Check:

- To what extent does your act move from the believable to the unbelievable?
- Are you doing demonstrations at the beginning of your act that may be too unbelievable or too strong?
- To what extent do you show real excitement when you make the impossible happen?

Guideline Five: Multiple Moments of Amazement

To hold people's interests, each demonstration should have multiple moments of amazement. That is, the mentalist should look for ways to display the same mental ability **more than once**. And the mentalist should look for ways to make each subsequent display of an ability more convincing.

Consider this example: *The Mother of All Book Tests (MOAB)* is one of the fairest and strongest demonstrations

of telepathy around. Imagine that a mentalist introduces the concept of telepathy and then forces the selection of the MOAB out of a stack of books. A person with the book selects and concentrates on any word. The mentalist then uses his or her telepathic ability to detect the freely selected word.

This demonstration might take three to six minutes. This is direct and strong mentalism.

But I believe a mentalist could present a more entertaining and impressive demonstration of his or her telepathic ability if he or she was able to quickly read the thoughts of several people. In my telepathy demonstration ("Books Galore"), I reveal five or six thoughts during a period of seven to nine minutes, creating five or six moments of amazement. And I end with the *Mother of All Book Tests* for a strong finish.

As an entertainer, I have a limited amount of time to make an impression on my audience. Properly introducing each demonstration takes time. Having multiple moments of amazement allows me to pack more entertainment into each demonstration.

Many classics of mentalism are entertaining (in part) because they rely upon multiple moments of amazement. But try to picture a few of these classics without those multiple moments: Imagine a sightless vision demonstration, or a two-person telepathy act, with only one or two objects being identified. Or imagine a Q & A act with only one or two questions being answered.

Speed is important when performing a demonstration with multiple moments of amazement. I push myself to

move through each display of the ability as quickly as possible to prevent people from getting bored or restless.

It is also important to make each moment of amazement **convincing**. This normally requires **using different methods of deception** for the various moments of amazement within a demonstration. For example, in my telepathy demonstration ("Books Galore"), I use four different methods of forcing a word to disguise how I actually learn the words.

It is also important to know when to end each demonstration. In the past, I have used as many as ten books in my telepathy demonstration. I quickly sensed that this was way too much. It was overkill. People were starting to lose interest before my ending.

Again, there are no absolutes. Trust your intuition when deciding how many moments of amazement to build into each demonstration. In my current 45-minute corporate act, I have six demonstrations with 22 moments of amazement. That is, audience members witness 22 events in my act that I believe are impressive and entertaining.

Quick Check:

- How many moments of amazement do you have in each of your demonstrations?
- How could you add more moments of amazement within each demonstration to make each demonstration stronger?

- To what extent do you use different methods of deception within each demonstration?
- Are there any demonstrations in your act that have too many moments of amazement?

Guideline Six: Innocent or Natural Props

To make each demonstration appear fair and genuine, the mentalist should use as few props as possible. The ideal mentalist would use no props! Some top mentalists, like Ted Karmilovich, have developed prop-free mentalism acts.

I'm not there yet. So I use props that are as innocent looking as possible. And, to minimize suspicions, I give audience members the opportunity to hold and examine almost everything I use during my act. A few items, however, are quickly put away.

During my act, people see me using an easel, some markers, some pieces of cardboard, a stack of paperback books, and a pad of drawing paper. Corporate audiences are familiar with these items. Each looks natural or normal. Of these items, only three of the six paperback books are gaffed. But all six books are given to people to examine and hold during the act. Few people think "gaffed books" as I perform.

I also use a newspaper article, some breath mints, and some postcards in one demonstration. In my opinion, these items may seem less natural for a corporate audience. To

reduce any suspicions, I leave them with people after I'm done. While I realize these props may seem somewhat contrived, I haven't discovered more commonplace items to substitute for them.

I absolutely avoid using anything that looks "magical", or any item that a magician commonly uses.

Key Point: I can't control what audience members think as they watch me perform. And I want them to believe that what they are seeing is real.

Corporate audiences are mildly suspicious to begin with. Audience members make judgments as they watch me perform each demonstration. If I use a prop they saw David Copperfield (or any other magician) use, some audience members will instantly think "magic trick." These people will quickly suspend their belief in my mental abilities. Likewise, if the Fox Network ever exposes any of the items or methods I now use, I will immediately eliminate that item from my act.

For many reasons, I no longer use playing cards in my act. Even when playing cards are introduced and justified as "52 different and easily identifiable items," I'm afraid many people will still categorize what I'm doing as a card trick. **I can't stop some audience members from making that connection.**

And if this occurs, I am no longer helping them explore the untapped powers of the mind; I'm doing a magic trick. That's not what I want my audience to think! And that's not why I was hired.

Recently, I have noticed more and more full-time mentalists moving completely away from playing cards in their corporate acts. In my opinion, this is a move in the right direction for the art of mentalism. And finding less suspicious substitutes for playing cards is not that difficult to do. (See “State Of Mind” and “Mega-Memory Miracle” in Chapter Twelve).

Once again, there are no absolutes. Here’s one exception. I occasionally perform Larry Becker’s “Casino Royale” for audiences who have seen me previously. This clever and entertaining routine uses several items found in a casino. In this routine, the gambling theme makes the playing cards seem natural.

Recently, I have been avoiding using any electronic or computer-related items in my act. Even if the items are ungaffed, using such items may cause some people to suspect I’m using electronic gimmicks... and suspend their belief. And Ted Lesley, the wonderful German mentalist, once warned me that anything electronic will break sooner or later. Ted’s prediction came true within ten days of our phone conversation.

Finally, avoid overusing any one prop. I can perform five different demonstrations that use gaffed or ungaffed postcards. Yet, I use postcards only **once** during an act or show. To use postcards more than once in an act would cause people to become suspicious.

Quick Check:

- What items or props are you using in each demonstration?
- Will any of these props appear unnatural or suspicious to your typical audience? What could you substitute for these props?
- To what extent do you allow people to examine any suspicious props during or after your act?
- What items or props do you use more than once during your act?

Guideline Seven: Maximum Impact

For each demonstration to have its maximum impact, everyone in the audience should be able to see and hear each moment of amazement clearly.

Mentalism packs small. All the props for my corporate act will fit inside a small carrying case.

But mentalism doesn’t always play big. I have seen several mentalists fail to impress their audiences because some audience members couldn’t understand or hear what was happening at the critical points of a demonstration.

Success as a mentalist is directly related to the performer’s **verbal communication skills**. To win the admiration and respect of a corporate audience, a mentalist needs to:

- Create presentations that capture and hold the attention of audience members,
- Possess (or develop) a pleasant speaking voice and use proper grammar,
- Present each demonstration in a clear, understandable, and convincing manner, and
- Give absolutely clear verbal instructions to the people from the audience who help with demonstrations.

Success as a communicator begins with the careful development of a script for each demonstration. Frequent practice, and feedback from other entertainers, will accelerate your development as a corporate entertainer. In fact, many full-time mentalists seek out the assistance of communication professionals (in theater, public speaking, etc.) to develop their capabilities as communicators.

In addition, to achieve the maximum impact from each demonstration, be sure that:

1) Everyone can hear everything you say. A good sound system is a must. I use a wireless lavalier microphone. This frees my hands to gesture and handle my props naturally, and I can still be heard. Other mentalists use a hand-held wireless microphone. Try both and decide which works best for you.

2) Everyone can hear the verbal revelations of audience members. My preference is to allow the people who help me with a demonstration to remain in the audience. I believe audience members are more comfortable staying in their seats than coming on stage.

However, comments made by people in the audience are hard for everyone to hear. When **working with people who remain in the audience**, I always **paraphrase** what people say so the entire audience knows what was said. Another option is to have an assistant with a hand-held mike in the audience.

When I do bring **people on stage**, I have an additional microphone (on a stand) for them to use.

3) Every written revelation can be easily seen. Predictions and revelations should be as large as possible. Consider this example: In my mental influence demonstration ("Triple Influence"), I call attention to a rolled-up banner. I explain that the banner contains the three choices I will attempt to influence. I then force items on three different people. To see if I was successful in influencing their choices, I slowly unroll the banner. The lettering on the banner is eight inches tall. Everyone can read the printing. Everyone can see I was successful.

Compare that ending to one in which the three choices are written on an 8½ by 11-inch piece of paper and handed to an audience member at the start of the demonstration. At the end of the demonstration, the person is asked to read what's written on the paper.

The impact of this demonstration will be reduced in two ways. First, I am dependent on that person's reading and speaking ability. Second, only that person can **see and understand** that I was correct. Even if the person shows the piece of paper to the audience, only part of the audience will know I was correct.

That's the one weakness I see in the classic mentalism effect, "Confabulation." At the end of the routine, very few can see that the mentalist's written premonition was accurate.

Visibility multiplies believability. It takes planning and creativity to make each revelation and prediction as large as possible. But if audience members can't see it, they are less likely to believe it. And if they can't see it, it may be less entertaining.

Quick Check:

- What do you do to make sure everyone can hear you?
- What do you do to make sure the audience hears the people who help you when you perform?
- How could you enhance your act by making your revelations and predictions larger and easier to see?

Guideline Eight: A Likeable Persona

For a corporate audience to enjoy a performance, watching a mentalism act must be fun... an interesting and memorable experience. Audience members must leave liking the performer as a person.

While this guideline may not apply to all forms of mentalism, the corporations that hire me to work at their events normally don't want an entertainer who is aloof, offensive, or too scary. They want me to be interesting and amazing. And they also want me to be friendly, approachable, and likable.

To be seen as likable, I believe an entertainer must first and foremost enjoy performing mentalism. The entertainer must also be very comfortable with his or her style of performing and the role he or she is playing on stage. The entertainer's level of enjoyment will be visible to the audience... and is often contagious. Fortunately, I truly love performing mentalism. And I enjoy making people laugh as I perform my act. When the audience sees me having fun, it gives them permission to relax and have fun as well.

A mentalist must interact with audience members while entertaining and amazing people. This makes mentalism different from many other forms of entertainment. To be likeable, a mentalist must understand and take advantage of this interaction.

Being seen as likable depends heavily on how the mentalist treats each audience member who helps during the act. Each person should be treated with courtesy and respect. Comic put-downs of the people who help me just won't work when I'm doing my corporate act.

Being likable also depends upon the behavior of the people I select from the audience to help me. Selecting the wrong person to help can turn an enjoyable demonstration into an uncomfortable battle of wits. Many mentalists learn this lesson the hard way.

I am very careful about the helpers I select to work with me during my act. This is where some of **my real psychic or intuitive abilities** are put to the test. I seek out people who appear:

**cooperative,
able to follow instructions,
and comfortable being briefly in the spotlight.**

(They should also **wear eyeglasses** if being asked to read anything.)

I scan the audience before I walk on stage to identify possible helpers. I continue scanning the audience as I make my introductory remarks. I'm not always right. But as with using any psychic ability, I've gotten better at selecting people over the years.

Success at selecting audience members begins with first knowing what to look for, and then trusting your intuition.

My act involves at least 18 people from the audience. To keep these helpers as comfortable as possible, I normally allow most of them to remain in their seats as we work together.

However, when performing before groups larger than 150 people, it may be necessary to bring more people on stage so they can be seen and heard by everyone (the Guideline on Maximum Impact). In these situations, I select my helpers before my act starts. As people arrive, I introduce myself to a few people as their entertainment and ask if they would be comfortable helping me during my act. I emphasize, *"I'm not a comedian. And I promise to not embarrass you. In fact, you will have more fun helping me than just watching."* About seventy percent of the people agree to help.

When they agree, I give them an index card with a handwritten number. I tell them I will call them on stage by number. Giving people numbers makes it easier for them to know exactly when to come up on stage. Giving each person something in writing minimizes the chances that the number will be forgotten. More importantly, calling people on stage by number minimizes the dead time between demonstrations.

Unless it is something extremely simple, I rarely select a person randomly to help me with a demonstration. Many of my worst moments as a performer can be traced back to situations where I didn't carefully select the right person to help me.

One final observation: I have discovered that the clothes I wear influence what a corporate audience thinks about me **before I say a word**. I want to appear normal and approachable (rather than dark and mysterious). I deliberately wear a conservative sport coat, a white or blue dress shirt, an attractive necktie, and dress slacks. This outfit works for ninety percent of my corporate events. No black shirts. No tuxedos. For me, black shirts and tuxedos communicate the wrong message. They just don't fit me or my style of performing. But again, there are no absolutes.

Quick Check:

- How comfortable are you with your act and style of performing?
- What parts of your act or patter might be offensive to your typical audience?
- What qualities do you look for in the people you select to help you?
- To what extent do the clothes you wear communicate the message or image you want your audience to receive?

Chapter Four

Three Kinds of Pre-Show Work

The success of my act depends on three kinds of critical pre-show work.

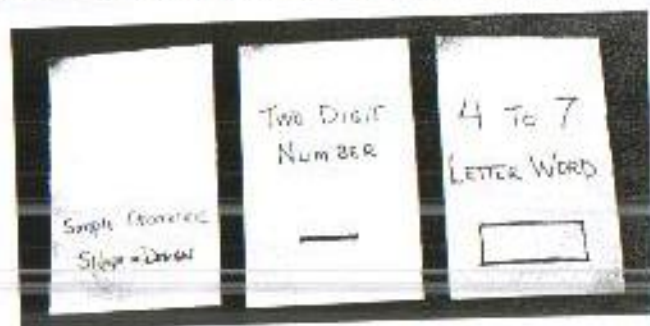
The first kind of pre-show work involves sending a **confirmation letter** that outlines my understanding of the key details my client and I agreed on. This letter also lists my presentational requirements. I send this letter to the person who hired me within twenty-four hours of my getting the job. The purpose of this letter is to minimize any misunderstandings. Using this letter, ninety-five percent of the time I have everything I need when I arrive. (See Appendix, Items 1 and 2.) This letter also contains suggestions for promoting and describing my act.

The second kind of pre-show work involves **gathering the pre-show information** I will use during my act. This kind of pre-show work is a mentalist's secret weapon! For a number of years, I used Lee Earle's Micro-Thin Clipboard, which is no longer available. Recently Bob Cassidy and John Riggs

both released excellent thin clipboards that meet my needs. (See "Books and Supplies.") Both boards allow me to complete my pre-show work in less than five minutes by working with just one person. For me, this is a nice advantage.

To perform the act in this book, I need one person to supply three different pieces of information: a word, a geometric shape, and a two-digit number.

Here's what I do: I prepare three pieces of paper using a ballpoint pen. (Both clipboards are 6 inches by 9 inches; the paper I use is 5 inches by 8½ inches.) The top piece reads "Simple Geometric Shape or Design," the next piece reads "Two Digit Number," and the bottom piece reads "4-to 7-Letter Word." Note: I space these words out on the pieces of paper so that the individual pieces of information won't be written on top of each other. See the example below.



Picture 1

I place these three pieces of paper on the front of the clipboard under the clip. Three 3 5/8-inch by 6 1/2-inch white security envelopes are held to the back of the board by a small paperclip.

I approach a cooperative-looking person before the show. I introduce myself and explain that I will be doing

an **exercise involving communication** later during the event. I ask if he or she is willing to help me, emphasizing that I will not be asking them on stage and I will not embarrass them in any way. I carefully explain what I want written or drawn on each piece of paper. I step away, emphasizing that I don't want to see what is written. As the person starts writing, I say,

I will turn around so I can't see what you have selected. Please tell me when you have written down your design, number, and word.

I wait for the person to tell me he or she is finished. I still have my back turned away.

Now, remove the pieces of paper from under the clip. Turn the board over. Remove the envelopes that are on the back of the board. Fold each sheet of the paper and put one sheet of paper in each of the envelopes. Then seal the envelopes. Please tell me when you are done.

I turn around, thank the person, and ask him or her to keep the envelopes until I ask for them during my act. Both the Cassidy and Riggs clipboards will capture all three pieces of information. Even the shape or design, with two pieces of paper below it when drawn, will leave a visible impression.

I write the person's name down to help me remember it during the show.

Working with just one person saves me time. Of course, this same information could be collected separately from three people using other popular impression devices. I suggest that the serious mentalist purchase the book *Before*

the Curtain Rises, by Mark Strivings, for additional information on the art of pre-show work. (See "Books and Supplies.")

The third kind of pre-show work **involves arranging (or rearranging) my performing area** before people arrive. I arrive in the room where I will be performing ninety minutes before the audience is scheduled to arrive. For events with food, this means getting into the room ninety minutes before the meal starts, so I can make any needed changes.

I test the sound system. I check the lights to ensure that the room will be bright enough for people to read any printed material I use during my act. I arrange (or rearrange) the room to make sure everyone can see me and the flip chart I use. I make sure the stage is the correct size.

Next, I review my **checklist** to make sure all the materials I need during my act are present, and in their proper locations. (See Appendix, Item 3.)

I also seek out the person who hired me, to double-check the length of time I am expected to perform. Five percent of the time, I am asked to change the length of my show by five or ten minutes.

When finished, I wait for the audience to arrive, and then gather my pre-show information. I examine this information and make my final preparations for each demonstration. These final preparations are described in detail in Chapters Eight and Nine.

By arriving ninety minutes early, my pre-show work is often completed thirty to forty-five minutes before I am to perform. If I discover any problems with the room or equipment, ninety minutes is normally enough time to come up with a creative solution.

And ninety-five percent of the time, I am able to use the time before I perform to relax and mingle with people. Having this time to relax is important for me as an entertainer. When I have this time for myself, I'm fresh and completely prepared to give my audience my best when I walk on stage.

One last thing: My final pre-show activity is to connect with the person who will introduce me. I double-check to make sure this person has the Introduction I sent. If it has been misplaced, I give him or her an extra copy I always bring with me. We discuss the logistics of how I will be introduced. I want the audience to have a good feeling about me before I say a word. I am continually changing the wording of my Introduction to get the audience to like me before I say a word. (See Appendix, Item 4.)

The next six chapters of this book describe the six demonstrations I perform in my 45-minute corporate mentalism act.

Each demonstration focuses on a believable mental ability. Each has multiple moments of amazement. And each is audience-tested.

Again, I perform **Light Mentalism**. I suspect the experienced performer will quickly recognize several ways to make each demonstration stronger.

Regardless of your experience level, I hope this next section of the book yields several new ideas you can use to perform mentalism in a more entertaining and amazing manner.

Chapter Five

My Opener: Einstein's Demise

What The Audience Sees:

The performer does a quick, interesting, and truly amazing demonstration of rapid mathematics.

Background and Philosophy

I have always been fascinated by the Magic Square. But, for several years, I avoided performing it. It looked too much like a math stunt. It appeared too difficult. I was afraid audiences might get bored or confused.

But, as my performing style became lighter (more informative and humorous) and less serious and dramatic, performing a Magic Square became more attractive. I was also influenced by the impact Moshe Botwinick, one of my idols, has with his Magic Square routine.

A few years ago, I began using the Magic Square as an opener for my corporate act for three reasons:

- 1) It displays a believable mental ability.
- 2) It is easy to perform. I use an Automatic Magic Square similar to the one described in *Self-Working Number Magic* by Karl Fulves.
- 3) It creates a very strong impression on corporate audiences, and yet it can also be fun. I want to impress people with my mental abilities, but I also want them to laugh and relax. Plus I want an opener that gets the audience feeling comfortable with my style of performing.

Since this demonstration is my opener, I also had a goal of keeping the mathematical aspect under 3-1/2 minutes in length. I don't want to lose the attention of those who are turned off by anything mathematical. But, I also don't want to go so fast that the audience can't follow what is happening. Getting the right patter and pacing involved lots of experimenting.

Note: I never use the term "Magic Square" in my performance. Rather, I call this demonstration of rapid mathematical ability "Einstein's Demise."

Method: My Automatic Magic Square

An automatic magic square is a magic square with 12 fixed numbers and only 4 numbers that change with each performance. The 12 fixed numbers must be memorized. Only 4 simple mathematical calculations are necessary to determine the 4 remaining numbers. What follows is an automatic magic square that can be used for any total above 30.

The fixed numbers I memorize for my automatic square are:

11	14	5	A
4	B	10	15
C	7	12	9
13	8	D	6

The mathematics to complete the magic square are simple. Let's say you want to complete a magic square for the **target number 47**. Here is the simple math:

A is 47 minus 30 **A** is 17

B is **A** plus 1 **B** is 18

C is **A** plus 2 **C** is 19

D is **A** plus 3 **D** is 20

Here is the completed automatic magic square for **47**:

11	14	5	17
4	18	10	15
19	7	12	9
13	8	20	6

This automatic magic square has these advantages:

I start by filling in the numbers on the top row. My first calculation (**A**) involves subtracting 30 from the target number. This couldn't be much easier! And **A** becomes a **visual** key for calculating the remaining numbers.

B is **one row** below **A**, which reminds me to add 1 to **A**. **C** is **two rows** below **A**, so I add 2 to **A**. **D** is **three rows** below **A**; I add 3 to **A**. This math is also very easy to do.

It took me about an hour to gain an initial mastery of this automatic square. The more I performed it, the easier the mathematics became.

Once a performer masters the mathematics, he or she must develop and memorize a presentation to accompany the math. I created a presentation that allows me to speak and fill in the numbers at the same time. This is what amazes people!

Pre-Show Work and Materials

The routine requires a flip chart stand with a solid back and a flip chart pad (34 inches by 27 inches). Most clients can provide a flip chart stand if I mention it in my Confirmation Letter. I use the largest tip black marker (5/8-inch tip) I can find to draw the grid (Avery Marks-A-Lot Series #2415 at most office supply stores.)

Before the show, I draw the grid on the top page of the pad. I make the grid as large as possible. I turn the page with the grid over the top of the stand, so the audience initially sees a blank page on the pad.

I also use two additional standard markers during the routine: dark blue and dark green. All three markers are left on or by the flip chart stand. **I always bring my own markers.** This ensures that all the markers will have fresh ink, and will produce numbers that are bold and easy to read.

Performance and Patter

My approach to performing this demonstration is to do the math as openly as possible. I step away from the easel (or to the side) several times during the routine to allow people to see the numbers and check the math. Pausing briefly is important. People must be able to **see the numbers to understand what I have done.**

My opening story is designed to introduce me to my audience and also to introduce my unifying theme. These comments take about three minutes. Here's exactly what I say. Feel free to use any part of it. Better yet, use these comments as a model to create your own unifying theme and patter.

As mentioned earlier, my unifying theme revolves around the life and times of Joseph Dunninger.

Note: Everything I say when I perform my act is in *italics*. I hope that this use of *italics* will help you separate my actions from my presentation as you read this book.

Words in **bold type** are those I emphasize during my presentations.

The use of humor by a mentalist is a personal choice. My humor may not fit your style. As always, there are no absolutes. But what's in this book works for me and the corporate audiences I appear before. It's clean humor that normally gets an audience laughing.

Thank you. I'm delighted to be here today and have the opportunity to talk about and demonstrate some untapped powers of the human mind. My interest in the un-

tapped powers of the mind can be traced back to something that happened to me on the day of my tenth birthday.

It was a beautiful, warm summer day in Illinois... bright blue skies... a few white clouds. My parents had the typical birthday party planned. My friends were invited over. We played games. We ate ice cream and cake.

And I remember that, at about 4:30 in the afternoon, as my friends were leaving, my grandfather arrived in his new, black Oldsmobile sedan. Out of the back seat my grandfather removed a beautifully wrapped birthday present for me. As he carried the gift inside I became excited, because the size of the box my grandfather was carrying was exactly the same size as a brand new little league catcher's mitt. My dream when I was 10 years old was to be a major-league catcher. To be a catcher for the Chicago White Sox!

When everyone was inside, my grandfather gave me the gift. I quickly removed the paper, opened the box, and looked inside. But what I found inside wasn't a catcher's mitt. It wasn't a football jersey. But it was something every ten-year-old boy truly desires: a book.

Pause... there is usually a small laugh from this last line.

The book was titled Dunninger's Amazing Mental Secrets. To appreciate this story, you need to understand that Dunninger—Joseph Dunninger—was a major-league personality in this country. In fact, in the early 1950s Dunninger became world famous because of his ability to train his mind to do things other people hadn't yet learned to do with their minds. Dunninger could read a book from cover to cover in less than two hours with high comprehension.

Dunninger could do amazing mathematical calculations in his mind. Dunninger could be introduced to fifty strangers, and a day later—or a week later—remember each person's name and occupation.

Note: This story is pure fiction. Such a book doesn't exist. But this story introduces Joseph Dunninger to my audience. They learn that Dunninger became famous by training his mind to do things others haven't yet learned to do. What Dunninger did with his mind seems believable. If people want to learn more about Dunninger, I tell people to go to the Amazon.com web site and enter "Dunninger." The best source I have found for information on Dunninger is the book by Joseph Atmore. (See the section on "Books and Supplies" near the end of this book.)

My grandfather had just listened to Dunninger speak, watched Dunninger do some amazing mental demonstrations, and bought me the book with the hope that it would help me some day. Well, being a typical ten-year-old boy, I politely thanked my grandfather for the book, put it down, and eventually went outside to play with my friends.

It wasn't until some thirty years later when I was doing some house cleaning—getting rid of things I no longer needed—that I next ran across the book my grandfather gave me on my tenth birthday: Dunninger's Amazing Mental Secrets. And for some strange reason, I sat down on the floor and read the first chapter of this book given to me thirty years earlier.

And, believe it or not, in the very first chapter I discovered several ways to train my mind to do a few demonstrations that are easy to learn and yet rather amazing. Let me

show you a demonstration that Dunninger often did to display his ability to do rapid mathematical calculations.

I toss a paper ball to a person in the audience.

Please give me a number between one and eight.

I repeat this request with a second person. I write the two-digit number created, 47 (for this example), below the square on the easel.

This number, 47, will be our target number for this demonstration of rapid math. I will attempt to quickly identify several combinations of numbers that add up to 47.

I quickly write the four numbers across the top row of boxes.

The first four numbers are the easiest because there are over 200 combinations of numbers that add up to 47. Let's see how I did.

I step aside to allow people to see the easel.

*11 and 14 are 25... and 5 is 30... and 17 adds up to 47. You know, if I asked my son what 11, 14, 5 and 17 were, he **wouldn't** say 47. He would say NBC, The Weather Channel, ESPN, and HBO.*

This is a nice laugh line. I want my audiences to relax, laugh, and have fun during my corporate act. I can often tell how well my humor will work with an audience based on how they react to this line.

Let's fill in this column of boxes going down the grid. Since I need to begin with 11, there are only about 30 possible combinations that add up to 47. But only one combi-

nation will work for this demonstration. (Write the numbers.) Let's see how I did.

I step aside again.

11 and 4 are 15... and 19 is 34... and 13 also adds up to 47.

*By the way, this demonstration is often called **Einstein's Demise**. Albert Einstein, even though he had one of the finest minds of his time, was never able to learn and memorize the 16 mathematical formulas necessary to fill in the 16 boxes. The remaining 9 boxes are the most difficult to fill in because the mathematical calculations are much more complex and interrelated.*

*I turn to the easel and fill in the last 9 numbers, **speaking as I write**.*

The computer on my desk performs several thousand calculations per second. A math teacher who saw me do this demonstration calculated that what I'm doing now involves about three calculations per second. But I discovered that's only impressive if the calculations are correct. Let's see how I did.

I now step to the side of the easel and begin to show that each row and each column also adds up to 47. As before, I do the math as I go.

Let's first check the columns going down the page. 14 and 18 is 32... and 7 is 39... and 8 is 47.

*Doing the math out loud for each set of numbers is the **hardest part** of the routine for me, especially if the target number is 50 or greater. But I believe that doing the math*

out loud for the audience is critical to helping the audience understand and appreciate what I have done. Yet I move as fast as I can so I don't bore people.

After showing that all rows and columns add up to 47, I step aside, stop speaking, and look at the audience. These actions often trigger the start of some light applause. I deliberately interrupt the applause.

This is often where the thunderous spontaneous applause begins. But wait, you people are a special group. I wanted to do more than this for you. You each made some sacrifices to be here today. While these calculations were difficult, it was even more difficult to get these four numbers in the middle of the square to also add up to 47.

Using a green marker, I draw a box around these four numbers (18, 10, 7 and 12) to show the audience which numbers I'm talking about. I do the math out loud to show that they add up to 47.

18 and 10 is 28... and 7 is 35... and 12 is 47.

And it was even harder to get these four numbers in this little square to also add up to 47 (I lightly circle the four numbers in the upper left corner and do the math for the audience)... and these four numbers. I circle these four numbers in the lower left corner and do the math. I do the same with the last two corners.

I again step aside and wait for the applause to start.

No, not yet. Save your applause for when I'm done. You people are truly special. I wanted to do more than just this for you. The really hard part was to also get the numbers on the diagonals to add up to 47.

I draw a light line with the blue marker to help the audience see what numbers I'm talking about. I do the math for one diagonal and then the other diagonal. I step aside again and wait for the applause.

No, not just yet. Please save your thunderous spontaneous applause for later. Because while this looks almost impossible, the most difficult part was also getting the four corners to add up to 47.

I circle each of the four corners and do the math.

I step aside, pause, look at the audience, and bow slightly. This is my signal to the audience to applaud. (If necessary, I say, "Now isn't that amazing!")

During the applause, I pick up a sealed 9-by-12-inch white envelope. (It will be used in my closing demonstration.)

A few months ago, my high school math teacher saw me do this demonstration. He was so impressed, he sent me a plant. Do you know how I could tell the plant was from my math teacher? The plant had square roots.

This story was deliberately chosen to produce groans rather than laughter. It is also used to allow me to talk about a hunch I had.

I had a hunch you would react like that. It must be too late in the day for that kind of humor. In fact, before I started today, I had several other hunches on how you would respond, and I put those hunches in this envelope. Please hold this for me and we will see if my hunches are accurate a little bit later.

I give the envelope to someone in the first row to hold. This envelope will be used during my closer, "Final Forecast." The preparation of this envelope is explained in Chapter Nine.

Final Thoughts

- There is a fine line between showing off and displaying a mental ability that is interesting and entertaining. I have designed this first demonstration to be informative, fun, and still amazing.

- Being able to speak and fill in the numbers **at the same time** was the hardest part of this demonstration to master. With lots of practice, this became second nature.

- Once all 16 boxes are filled in, I try to create four moments of amazement. First, I add up the rows and columns. Then I joke about applause. Second, I point out the 5 combinations within the grid. I joke a little more about applause. Third, I point out the diagonals. I joke some more. Finally, I point out the four corners. Joking about applause may not fit your style, but it is comfortable for me.

- I refrain from pointing out the other combinations that also add up to the target number. In my opinion, that would be overkill. Four moments of amazement are enough. Plus, pointing out the additional combinations will definitely confuse some in the audience. I stop when I'm ahead.

- Never repeat this demonstration for the same audience, or after the show when people ask you questions. Some people will discover the pattern. If they discover the pattern, it becomes a magic trick. Learn a second automatic magic square. Or check out Doug Dymont's book,

Mindsights, for his clever ideas on ways to disguise an automatic magic square. (See "Books and Supplies.")

- To impress upon people that this mental ability can be learned if you are willing to train your mind, I sometimes give those who comment about this demonstration after the show a handout outlining a way to do a magic square. See Appendix Item 5 for a copy of my handout. Obviously, this is a much, much harder method for doing the magic square... further impressing upon people that what I did was very, very difficult. And people are grateful that I am willing to share one of my secrets with them. Of course, I'm not disclosing the automatic magic square.

Chapter Six

Demonstration Two: Triple Influence

What The Audience Sees:

The performer successfully influences selections made by three different people, using three different methods of influence. One person selects one of three packs of breath mints or gum. Another person selects one of twenty post-cards. A third person selects a line of text from a newspaper article with over sixty lines of text. All three choices match what's printed on a banner that was on display before the demonstration started.

Background and Philosophy

Most audience members believe that it is possible for one person to persuade others, or at least influence their choices and decisions. Advertisements surround us. Sales people are everywhere. Commercials fight for our attention.

I build on this belief. I explain that I will give three people free choices to make, and that I will attempt to guide their choices by using different methods of influence or persuasion.

Everything appears fair because all the choices are open and natural. My banner is on display before I start. The props I use are items people are familiar with.

This demonstration also has multiple moments of amazement, each a little more unbelievable. At the end, everyone can see what is printed on the banner.

While I have fun presenting this demonstration, it also has a very strong ending. There are often gasps during the final revelation. I place it second in my act to get attention. I want to surprise people with an ending that is stronger than they may have expected.

Method

I use three different methods to force the three outcomes I want.

The force of the mints and gum is my own creation. The breath mints and gum can be purchased at any large drugstore. This force **does not** rely upon equivocation.

I discovered three packages of spearmint breath mints or gum that have **significantly different packaging** and appear to be different flavors. The Certs Spearmint mints are in a **gold** package. The Breath Savers Spearmint mints are in an all-**white** package. The Wrigley's Spearmint gum is a **green** Package. As I handle and mix the mints and gum, I **miscall the flavors**, indicating one package is wintergreen, another spearmint, and the last peppermint. From two feet

away, people can easily see that the different colors and yet are unable to read the flavors.

The postcard is forced by using a homemade stack of "Pop-eyed Popper" postcards. During my card magic days, I was always impressed with the fairness, simplicity, and deceptiveness of a "Pop-eyed Popper" deck. My "Pop-eyed Popper" stack consists of sixteen pairs of postcards, each pair consisting of a force postcard and an indifferent one. The picture side of each pair is an indifferent postcard, and the address side is the force postcard. The cards in each pair are held together by very small amounts of Michael Ammar's Magic Wax. I prefer Ammar's wax to roughing spray. It creates a better bond. (See "Book and Supplies" for a source for the postcards.)

The line of newspaper text is forced by using the "Miller Clipper," created by Roy Miller. (See "Books and Supplies.") Roy supplies several copies of a newspaper article on genuine newsprint that has the headline, byline, and first paragraph printed in a normal manner. The remaining six paragraphs of text are printed upside down.

This clever method of forcing a line of text has been a standard in magic for years. But the "Miller Clipper" makes everything seem fair, open, and natural. Another subtlety of the "Miller Clipper" allows you to do an additional telepathy demonstration if you wish. However, I only use the "Miller Clipper" to force a line of text.

Pre-Show and Materials

I place the mints and gum in my outside left coat pocket. I put a rubber band around the stack of postcards and put them in my left inside coat pocket.

I fold an ordinary postcard in half. The fold runs the long way. This creates a reusable sleeve to prevent any damage to the newspaper article. I put the "Miller Clipper" in the sleeve. I put the sleeve and article in my right inside coat pocket, along with the scissors.

When working without a coat, I place these items on one of the tables on the stage.

I use a banner-making program on my computer to create a banner that lists the force items. This banner is 11 inches tall by 60–70 inches wide, with easy-to-read bold printing. I roll up the banner, use a small binder clip (Office Max ¼-inch clip, #210) to hold it closed, and tape one end of the rolled-up banner to the wall behind the stage (or the flip chart stand). Of course, I could also make a hand-lettered banner by taping together several pages of 8½-by-11-inch paper.

When a banner is impractical, I use another method to allow the entire audience to see, at the end of this demonstration, that I was successful in influencing people's choices. I use the flip chart. Before the show, I write the force items on the top three pages of the pad, and then turn these pages over so they can't be seen during the demonstration. This is also fair and very visual.

Performance and Patter

This demonstration begins with a reference to Joseph Dunninger and the book given to me by my grandfather on my tenth birthday.

Immediately after learning how to do this mathematical demonstration from reading the first chapter of the book my grandfather gave me on my tenth birthday, I read the remaining chapters of the book. In fact, I re-read the book four times. And, as you might expect, each chapter described additional mental abilities Dunninger mastered in his lifetime.

As you might also suspect, Dunninger was a master communicator. In fact, he specialized in all forms of persuasion and influence. Dunninger was able to convince people to do almost anything. He once persuaded the mayor of New York City to lend him a police car so he could quickly move through traffic whenever he visited the city. In return, he offered to help the New York City police solve its most difficult crimes.

Dunninger identified several ways to influence a person's choices. In this next demonstration you will see me use three methods of persuasion I learned from Chapter Six of the Dunninger book my grandfather gave me on my tenth birthday.

Let's start with something simple.

I remove the three packs of mints and gum from my pocket and hold them so the audience can see them.

In a few minutes I will ask someone from the audience to select one of these packs from my hand. One pack is wintergreen, one is peppermint, and the other spearmint. The first package the person touches will be his or her choice. I suspect those of you with a background in advertising or marketing will immediately realize that the colors of the packages will influence the person's selection.

To make this work, I need to find the right kind of person.

I approach someone in the audience and extend my hand.

Hello, my name is Chuck Hickok; your name is...?

Note: This is how I introduce myself to everyone I ask to help me during my act. It allows the audience to hear my name several times. More importantly, this method of introducing myself is more polite than just asking, "What's your name?" I always repeat the person's name so the audience can hear it, and to help me remember it.

Mary, in a few minutes I will ask you to look at the three packs in my hand and quickly remove the one pack that appears most attractive to you. Again, one pack is wintergreen. One is peppermint. And the other is spearmint. But relax and let the colors influence your selection. If I have selected the right kind of person, your selection will match what's written on the banner that is taped to the back wall.

I point to the banner taped to the wall.

I turn back to Mary and hold up the green pack of gum.

Mary, as you can see, one of the packs is green. Green is often associated with money and prosperity. People with a strong interest in money and finance often select the green pack. But don't let what I've just said influence you in any way.

The last line, if said in just the right way, normally produces a nice laugh.

I hold up the gold pack of mints.

One pack of mints is primarily gold. Gold is often associated with power and control. People with a strong desire for power and control in the decisions that influence their lives often select gold. But, again, don't let what I've just said influence your selection.

I hold up the white pack of mints.

The final pack is white. White is often associated with creativity and independent thinking. White is often selected by people who aren't paying attention to my instructions right now.

I place all three packs on my palm and hold them in front of the person.

*Mary, please **quickly** take the pack that's most attractive to you. (I want the person to make a quick choice to hold the audience's interests). Excellent choice, Mary. In a few minutes we will all learn if you selected wintergreen, peppermint, or spearmint... and if your selection matches what's on the banner on the wall.*

I remove the postcards from my coat pocket.

I have close to twenty postcards from my favorite place to visit: Washington, D.C. There are so many interesting things to do in Washington: parks, museums, restaurants...

I walk up to a second person in the second or third row of the audience.

Hello, my name is Chuck Hickok; your name is... ? Bob, in a minute I will ask you to select one of these postcards. Again, I will try to influence your selection.

I spread the stack of postcards, showing several scenes to the audience.

*Bob, if I asked you to look at these postcards and select a postcard, your selection would be based primarily on the colors you see. The colors and scenes would influence your selection. But this time I will try to influence your selection by verbal methods or factors. I will try to influence your selection by modifying **the words I use...** and **how I say those words**. So listen carefully.*

I close the spread of postcards and rotate the stack so the audience can see the address side of the first postcard on the stack.

To eliminate the colors and scenes, we will use the backs of the postcards. The backs are almost identical. I will hold up the postcards, one at a time, so that you can see only the back. I will then ask you a question like, "Would you like this postcard?" I will modify the words I use and my tone and pace to try to influence your selection. If I do this correctly, the postcard you select will match what's on the banner on the wall. (Again, I point to the banner.)

*I hold the stack in my left hand, backs facing the audience. I lift the top postcard off the stack with my right hand. I keep its **back** toward the spectator and audience.*

Bob, would you like to stop at the very first postcard?

If the person says, "No," I show the scene on the postcard to the audience and announce its location.

Bob, the first postcard is the White House.

This helps everyone understand that all the scenes are different. I place this postcard on the bottom of the stack. I sometimes make humorous comments about some of the postcards to get people laughing. However, since September 11 most political jokes don't seem to go over as well.

I continue showing the postcards, one at a time, until the person selects one. As I show each postcard, I modify the words I use as well as the tone, pace, and emphasis of my questions. The person normally stops me between the fourth and eighth postcard.

Now for the one move. When the person selects a postcard, I place the selected postcard back on the stack in my left hand. The address side is facing the audience. I hold the stack at shoulder level. I do this as openly and fairly as possible to minimize any suspicion of sleight of hand. To provide a rationale for these actions, I ask the following question:

*Bob, you stopped me at the sixth postcard. Do you have any idea how many people stop me at **exactly** the sixth postcard? (Most people will say "No.") One hundred percent of the people named Bob. That's why I'm going to write your name on the postcard and give it to you for a souvenir.*

Still holding the stack of postcards in my left hand (about chest high, address sides still facing the audience), I write the person's name on the address side of the selected postcard with a marker. Then, moving the stack to about waist level, I split the pair of postcards and hand the person the postcard with his or her name on it. These actions appear very fair and natural. Pictures 2 and 3 show how I handle the postcards.



Picture 2



Picture 3

Hold onto this postcard and we will see if it matches what's written on my banner.

I remove the scissors and newspaper article from my right inside coat pocket. I approach a third person. I select someone from the **first row** of the audience who is wearing glasses.

For the last selection, we will use a newspaper article that I read recently and found fascinating. My name's Chuck Hickok, and you are... ? Chris, what's the headline on this article say?

My next actions are designed to allow the person to read the title of the article without noticing that the bottom paragraphs of the article are printed upside down.

I hold the article as shown below, with my thumb behind the article and my fingers covering the second paragraph of the text. My fingers are positioned so the person can read the headline and first paragraph. My little finger pulls the bottom part of the article back slightly so the last paragraphs can't be seen or read by this person or people nearby. I don't make a move out of this. See pictures 4 and 5 for this handling.



Picture 4



Picture 5

I move about ten feet back from the person to prevent anyone near the front from noticing the upside down printing. This is why I pick someone from the **front row**.

That's right. It's "Mayor versus City Council." It was an exciting council meeting. But this article has a line of text that caught my attention. I will try to influence you to select this line of text.

By the way, Chris, have you ever had a psychic experience? People often say "No." Great, because in a few minutes you will. Just relax and listen to my instructions.

This article has over 60 lines of text. I will slowly move the scissors up and down this article. (Demonstrate these

actions.) When I get to the line of text in this article that matches what's on the banner, I will think "Stop." I will try to influence your selection *mind-to-mind*. When you say "stop," I will cut the article at that line of text. I know this sounds a little strange. Just relax and trust your intuition. You will do great. Remember, whenever you want to me to cut the article, call out "stop."

I move the scissors up and down the article slowly.

Again, whenever you want to me to cut the article, call out "stop."

When the person says "stop," cut the article, letting the bottom part fall to the floor.

Chris, please do me a favor: Please come up here, pick up the article, and then return to your chair. Thank you. Now please read, *silently*, the first line of text. Now please read the remaining text. Does the line of text you cut to appear anywhere else in the article? If the same line of text appeared more than once in the article, that would certainly increase my odds of my being successful. Does the line of text you cut to appear anywhere else in the article?

Note: These last lines are used to address the natural suspicion that some people—who can't see the article—might have. Is this overkill? I don't know. Again, there are no absolutes. Over the years, I have grown comfortable using these lines to eliminate one possible solution or method.

Now, let's see if I was able to influence, as Dunninger often did, the choices of three people using three different methods of influence. First the mint and gum. Mary, there

were three flavors: peppermint, spearmint, and wintergreen. Which flavor did you select, based on the color of the package? Spearmint.

I walk over to the banner, remove the clip and slowly unroll the banner so the audience can see that it says "Spearmint."

Bob, you could have selected any one of twenty different locations. What location did you select? The Lincoln Memorial.

I think it was Abraham Lincoln who said that if someone bigger than you wants to pick a fight with you, always volunteer to first walk a mile in that person's shoes. That way, if the person is still mad at you, you will be a mile away and have the person's shoes. (Sorry, this line is one of my favorite lines. And it creates some anticipation.)

I unroll the banner so the audience can see that it says "Lincoln Memorial."

Chris, you were the hardest person to influence. Is it possible to influence people mind to mind? What does the line of text say? *"There was an air of expectancy."* The first line reads, *"There was an air of expectancy"*? OK, then that's what we should see next on this banner:

This is optional, but my banner also contains two words—"Final Answer"—before the line from the article. I unroll the banner so the audience can read "Final," pause, and allow them to read "Answer." Revealing these two words will get a laugh.

Chris, is *"There was an air of expectancy"* your final answer?

I unroll the banner so the audience can see "There was an air of expectancy." I tape the banner to the wall.

Of course, I could use a banner without "Final Answer," but I like the additional element of suspense and the humor.

Final Thoughts

- While the props in this routine seem a little out of place or suspicious, they are items that people recognize. And because these items are used early in the act, the audience may be more trusting at this point. All the audience members have seen thus far is an impressive, believable mathematics demonstration.

- This demonstration could be performed using other methods to force an object, item, or number. You may already have several good forcing methods. You do not need to buy any of the methods I use. However, it is hard for me to imagine a fairer, stronger forcing method than the Miller Clipper.

- In some situations, I use six mints and a bit of equivoque. I ask the first person to hold out both palms. I place the force mints in one palm and three indifferent mints in the other palm and say these words:

Please give me one handful back. I see you gave me green, gold and white packs to use in this demonstration. (Or, I see you decided to keep the green, gold, and white pack to use.) The colors you gave me (or held onto) green, gold, and white—are seventy-five percent more attractive

to people, based on a recent study by Advertising Age. That's why you see these colors on so many packages. People almost always select the ones you did. So far so good. I hand out the indifferent mints to other audience members.

I do the rest of the demonstration as described. Then, just before unrolling the first choice on the banner, I ask, "Who ended up with the Cinnamon mint? Those are my favorites." This helps sell the idea that all six packs were different. All four packs left in the audience can be inspected.

- The Ammar Wax can be tricky in hot weather. I break the wax on each pair of postcards and then re-align the postcards **before each show**. This insures an easy separation.

- **Things I've learned the hard way:** Remember to trim the newspaper article to your force line before the show. (Yes, I forgot one time.) Watch your distance from the audience when cutting the article. Don't stand too close. (Yes, someone once asked, "Why are some of the paragraphs printed upside down?") And don't leave the scissors in your carrying case. (I did once, and I had to awkwardly look for scissors in the middle of my demonstration.) I now use my checklist (Appendix, Item 4) to make sure I have everything where I need it before the show starts.

- **Learning never ends.** After 300 shows, I thought I had discovered almost everything that could sidetrack this demonstration. In a recent show, after pulling out the newspaper article, I said to a person in the audience, "My name is Chuck Hickok; your name is...?" The person said, "Wintasaka

Minnemiskaski." I asked the person to repeat the name, and again heard a name I knew I could never repeat.

I slowly looked out at the audience. The audience sensed my dilemma and began to laugh. To move on with the routine, I said, *"Well, for the next few minutes I will call you Tom."* I don't know where that reply came from. But this line got a loud laugh. I relaxed and continued with the routine.

After the show, I evaluated how I handled the situation. Did my response offend this person? Maybe. Is being called "Tom" offensive to some people? I don't know. But I began searching for a better response to use the next time this occurs.

My current solution: the next time I hear a name I know I can't pronounce, I will say, *"Well, for the next few minutes I will call you 'my friend.' Is that OK?"* I suspect that there may be a better solution, but I haven't discovered it yet.

Chapter Seven

Demonstration Three: People Reading Plus

What the Audience Sees:

Five people are each asked to draw a picture on a piece of white cardboard. The performer uses his mental abilities to determine who drew each picture.

Background and Philosophy

This demonstration is influenced by many classics of mentalism. Al Koran had an early version in *Professional Presentations* called "Doodle." There is an element of psychometry to this demonstration, and *Mind, Myth and Magick* by T. A. Waters contains many fine ideas on this topic. Larry Becker's *Stunners* includes "Sneak Thief," a wonderful variation that adds several creative refinements to this classic.

Personally, I have been greatly influenced by Moshe Botwinick's wonderful presentation from his stage show. I asked Moshe for his permission to pattern my presentation after his, because of our similar backgrounds as educators in the field of communication. Moshe gave me this permission with the understanding that I would not publish my patter.

So there will be no *Performance and Patter* section for this demonstration. However, I suspect most mentalists reading this book are already familiar enough with this type of demonstration to create their own patter.

But let me cover **why** I use this demonstration in my act.

- First, it fits my style as a performer. It's fun to do and fun to watch. While some audiences may not necessarily be blown away by the demonstration, they do relax and laugh.
- Second, it's very believable.
- Third, it has multiple moments of amazement.
- Fourth, it uses natural or commonplace props.
- And, while the method is simple to learn—the pieces of cardboard are marked—presenting this demonstration in a consistently entertaining manner has been one of the harder things for me to master as an entertainer. I judge this demonstration by the laughter it generates rather than the gasps it produces.

Unlike "Sneak Thief," I do not end with a design duplication of the final drawing. Ending with a design duplication is very strong, but in my act I want to display **one mental ability** per demonstration. My demonstration ends

with me quickly and simultaneously returning the final two drawings to their authors.

As I mentioned earlier, if I were asked to perform just one demonstration at an event, I might use the design duplication ending (like "Sneak Thief") to have a stronger, more unexplainable ending.

Method

By briefly looking at the pieces of cardboard during the demonstration, I can quickly determine who made each drawing.

Each piece of cardboard has a label I printed on my computer, containing a few simple instructions and my phone number. The wording of the instructions is identical on all five labels.

All the labels are placed at the same general location on the pieces of cardboard. All the labels are centered on the cardboard, about a quarter of an inch from the top edge.

The printed instructions on three labels are perfectly centered. One label is put on **straight**. One label is tilted such that its left corner is **lower** than its right. One is tilted such that its left corner is **higher** than its right corner. Picture 6 shows how I tilt these three labels.

The fourth label has the **printed instructions slightly lower** on the label. The fifth label has the **printed instructions slightly higher** on the label. These two labels are put on straight, as shown in Picture 7.



Picture 6



Picture 7

Examples of the Five Labels

Mind, Myth and Magick by T. A. Waters describes several other ways to mark items for psychometry demonstrations.

Another method I have used to determine who made each drawing involves putting all the labels on in an identical manner, but changing one of the digits in the phone number or zip code. I first saw this method in Larry Becker's *World of Super Mentalism*.

Pre-Show and Materials

This demonstration requires five identical black markers and five pieces of 8½-by-11-inch white cardboard. I visited a paper supplier to find pieces of white cardboard that were sturdy enough to draw on. I examined their stock and custom-ordered what they called white 24-pound cover stock. I had them cut the cardboard to the size I wanted. Any art supply store will also have thick, white cardboard that can be cut to this easy-to-see size.

I arrange the pieces of cardboard in the order I have memorized, using a rubber band to keep them together. I place the pieces on one of the tables. I put the five markers under the rubber band to keep them from rolling off the table.

Final Thoughts

- I believe the **strongest moment** of this demonstration comes when I correctly identify the person who drew the first drawing. That's one out of five. Identifying the next person correctly is one out of four. A little less amazing. For that reason, I work faster and faster as I move through this demonstration.

- This is one demonstration that requires the people helping me to come up on stage. I quickly leave the stage and select five cooperative-looking people. I don't ask. I just say, "Please come up on stage with me and help." When I'm off the stage, I am constantly talking to minimize any dead time. I get back on stage as quickly as I can to hold the audience's attention.

- I keep everyone on stage until the end of the routine so I can keep track of each person's initial location (a lesson I learned the hard way). And all five helpers get a round of applause for helping when the demonstration is over.

- I allow people to keep their drawings to minimize any suspicion that the pieces of cardboard are marked.

- I select people from different parts of the audience. I once made the mistake of choosing five people from the same table. As I did my next demonstration, I saw one person collecting and examining the pieces of cardboard. I don't think he discovered my method, but it was difficult for me to do the rest of my show as I watched this person compare the cardboards!

Chapter Eight

Demonstration Four: Books Galore

What the audience sees:

The performer asks several people to concentrate on words selected from different books. The performer is able to accurately determine every word by reading their thoughts.

Background and Philosophy

I love book tests! I am a founding member of the local chapter of **BTBA** (Book Test Buyers Anonymous). I have purchased and experimented with almost every book test sold in the last 20 years.

I normally use book tests to demonstrate telepathy or thought reading. But most book tests have one disadvantage: books can be seen as props by audience members, and cause some people to become suspicious.

If you can truly read minds, why use books?

I don't have a complete answer for this question. I attempt to work around this issue by performing a demonstration that uses several books, uses different methods, contains humor, moves fast, and gets more impossible as it goes along.

To do this demonstration exactly as I perform it, you will need to purchase three commercial book tests:

The Ultimate Flashback Set, by Larry Becker

Insight Book Test, by Keith Fields

Mother of All Book Tests, by Ted Karmilovich

Putting together a professional mentalism act normally requires an investment in a few props. In my corporate act, eighty-five percent of the cost can be attributed to these three fine book tests. I suspect most of the people reading this book already own one or more of them. (See "Books and Supplies" for current ordering addresses.)

Each of these clever book tests could be used—by itself—to present an entertaining demonstration of telepathic abilities! I have taken my favorite parts from each one to create a demonstration that fits my style of performing and the corporate audiences I work for.

To entertain a corporate audience, **pace and presentation** are critical.

- Verbal instructions need to be **given slowly and carefully**. Each person must understand what he or she is to do. I'm dead in the water if people don't understand my instructions.

- On the other hand, I **reveal** the words quite **quickly**. Going too slowly will bore most of today's corporate audiences. The pace used by mentalists in the 70s and 80s is just too slow.

- As I reveal the words, I try to display **excitement and energy**. Having real telepathic abilities is amazing!

I hope that reviewing this demonstration gives you an idea or two that you can use in your next telepathy demonstration or book test.

Thanks again to Larry Becker, Keith Fields, and Ted Karmilovich for their permission to explain aspects of their book tests. Without these, I wouldn't have been able to include this demonstration in this book.

Methods

I use three gaffed books and three ungaffed books during this demonstration. Each gaffed book comes with very detailed instructions, which go well beyond the brief instructions I will present.

I use *The Ultimate Flashback* paperback book from *Ultimate Flashback Set* to help me reveal the first four selections. (The *Ultimate Flashback Set* comes with several gaffed books, along with a very complete set of instructions by Larry Becker, which enable you to do a very powerful multiple-book telepathy demonstration.) In one paperback, *The Ultimate Flashback*, the **first word** on the top line of each left (even-numbered) page is identical to the **second-to-last word** on the top line of each right (odd-numbered) page. A quick glance at the opportune time gets me the selected word. Very simple and clean.

In addition, *The Ultimate Flashback* is gaffed so that the middle 85 percent of the pages are numbered identically: all the left pages are numbered 92 and all the right pages are numbered 93. I use this feature to force pages 92 and 93 in the three ungaffed books.

You will need to find three ungaffed books and memorize the first words (or other information) from pages 92 and 93 in each. To add humor and variety to this demonstration, I spent hours in a second-hand bookstore searching for books with these features on pages 92 and 93:

Book A: Blank page 92 and text on page 93.

Book B: Text on page 92 and a **picture or drawing covering** all of page 93. These are usually art books or travel books. There are almost no books with a blank page 93.

Book C: The first word on page 92 is a 5- to 9-letter **common word** and somewhere on page 93 is a **number or numeric value** that stands out. The first word on page 92 will be used in my final demonstration ("Final Forecast"). I look for inexpensive books, and buy several copies at a time, so I can give away Book C.

The *Insight Book Test* is gaffed so that once you learn the page number, you can reveal several pieces of information from the text of that page. I use the numerical information found in the **middle of each page**. As a backup, I sometimes use the occupational information that is contained in the last three sentences of the **even-numbered** pages, or the animals in last three sentences on the **odd-numbered** pages. Again, the instructions that

come with the *Insight Book Test* point out several additional ways to use this normal-looking book.

The *Mother of All Book Tests* (MOAB) is gaffed so that you can reveal almost any word selected from any page. To be successful, the mentalist must guide the person into selecting a longer word, and then ask one clever pumping question. It's hard to imagine anything more direct. As with the other book tests, the *Mother Of All Book Tests* comes with a manual that contains several clever ideas for using this classic of mentalism.

Pre-Show and Materials

I place the six books in a bag from a bookstore. The bag is placed on one of the tables.

I also use an 11- by 14-inch sketchpad from an art store to write some of the words. For groups of over 100 people, I use a 14- by 17-inch pad. I place the pad and some markers on a table.

I also give each person I work with a certificate, proclaiming her or his mental abilities. (See the Appendix, Item 7.) These certificates are placed below the pad.

Finally, I place a ballpoint pen and index card on the table. I will hand these to one person to use during the demonstration. They are placed on the table next to the pad.

Performance and Patter

While Dunninger trained his mind to do rapid math, read a person's body language, and influence a person's decisions, his final goal was to train his mind to read another person's thoughts.

Dunninger traveled the world exploring almost every possible technique for mind-to-mind communication. He visited major universities in Europe, Asia, and America trying to learn what worked best. Initially, he ran into a lot of dead ends. Three times he almost gave up his search.

For 10 years, Dunninger failed much more than he succeeded. Then, in 1945, with the help of Dr. Rhine at Duke University, he finally discovered techniques to sharpen his ability to concentrate and pick up what other people were thinking.

This doesn't always work, but let me attempt to demonstrate some of what Dunninger discovered to prove that mind-to-mind communication is sometimes possible. I brought with me several books from my favorite bookstore: Half-Price Books. How many of you have heard of Half-Price Books? All the books are 50 percent off. But what I discovered recently is that twice a year Half-Price Books has a half-price sale. That's when I stock up.

*As I make these comments, I pick up and show the audience the bag of books. I walk into the audience and give a book to each of five people near the front of the room. I look for people who appear cooperative and are also wearing glasses. I hold onto *The Ultimate Flashback*.*

Dunninger often used books in his telepathy demonstrations because he discovered that if people are looking at something printed in a book and also thinking about what they see, there is a higher chance for success. More mental energy is produced. Dunninger discovered that the mind is more active when someone is looking at and also thinking about a printed word, number, or design.

As I return to the stage, I look for one more person wearing glasses.

Hello, my name is Chuck Hickok; would you come up and help me? Your name is... ? Let's give Al a big hand for helping out. Al, in a few minutes you will have a chance to show these people what a great mind you have.

*I start riffling the pages of *The Ultimate Flashback* and demonstrate what will happen.*

Believe it or not: I discovered that ninety percent of the general public do not use or understand the meaning of the word "riffle." I no longer say "riffle" during my act.

*Al, in a few minutes I will **flip** through the pages of this book and ask you to say "stop." When you say "stop," I want you to look at and remember the first word on the page. Before we start, you may want to examine this book and make sure the first word on each page is different. That's the hard way to do this demonstration.*

I hand the book to the person.

Are the first words on all the pages different? Great, let's give this a try.

*I take the book back and hold it at shoulder level in preparation for the peek. (Read the instructions that come with the *Ultimate Flashback Set* for complete details.)*

I will look away to make this perfectly fair. (I turn my head away and slowly riffle the pages.) Tell me when to stop. OK, look at and remember the first word on the page. Do you have it firmly in your mind?

I turn back toward the person, glance at the word (second to last word on the opposite page) and then hand the opened book to the person to hold. I hold a page break until I hand the book to the person.

*Please hold the book. Please look at the first word on the page you stopped me at. I discovered that if you are looking at and thinking about the word you selected, it will be easier for both of us. To see if we are on the same mental wavelength, just look at and concentrate on the **first letter** of the first word on the page.*

I pick up the pad and marker. I face the person but also turn my body so that some of the people in the audience can see what I write on the pad. I write the first letter.

Al, tell everyone the letter you were thinking about. I repeat what Al says to make sure the entire audience will be amazed when I'm correct. C... the first letter is C.

I show the entire audience I wrote down a C.

Al, you have a real gift for this. Please concentrate on the rest of the letters in your word. Again, please look at the word in the book, so I can pick up the reflection off your glasses.

This line gets a nice laugh. I write down the rest of the word, again allowing some of the audience to see what I've written.

*Al, to see if we were successful working together, what's the word you were trying to send me mind-to-mind? **Court**? Like the place judges work? Court.*

I show the entire audience that I have written the word "Court" on my pad.

Al, do the people you work with know you have this ability? Well, here is a certificate you can take back to prove you have a great mind.

I pick up a certificate from my table. I give the person a certificate and take back *The Ultimate Flashback*.

Key Point: I want to collect the books as I present this demonstration. I believe it looks more natural to give the person something as I take back the book. That's the real reason for the certificates. I communicate this non-verbally by extending both hands as I offer the certificate. If necessary, I say, "You can give me the book."

As Al is walking off the stage, I walk up to someone in the front row who hasn't been involved yet and hand him or her *The Ultimate Flashback*. I now take advantage of the book's page-forcing feature.

*Please open this book anywhere near the middle. What pages did you stop at? Pages 92 and 93. Will everyone with a book please **stand up** and open your book to pages 92 and 93. (Having each person stand helps me quickly locate each book. It also helps the audience hear each person's answers to my questions.)*

I quickly take back the book, return it and the pad to the table, and pick up the stack of certificates, the pen, and the index card. I look back at the person who selected these pages.

Did you say pages 92 and 93? Please pick one of those pages to work with. Page 92. Everyone look at and concentrate on the first word on page 92.

I approach with the person with **Book A**. (**Book A** has a blank page 92.)

Please look at and concentrate on the first word on page 92. I'm not picking up much. When this happens, it often means that I'm having a bad day. It's my fault, not yours. Or sometimes this happens when page 92 is blank. Is page 92 blank?

This is often a stunning revelation, and also a place where many people laugh.

Quickly, look at the opposite page. Look at and concentrate on the first word on page 93. I could be wrong, but I am getting the word "forgetful." Is the word you were concentrating on "forgetful"? You have a great mind, too. Here's a certificate for you.

I give out a certificate and take back the book. I hold the book below the certificates.

I approach the person with text on page 92 and a blank page 93. This would be the person with **Book B**.

Please look at and concentrate on the first word on page 92. You have a great mind as well. I'm picking up the word "window." Was the word you were trying to send me "window"? Here is a certificate for you as well.

If page 93 were selected, I would work with **Book B** first and **Book A** second.

Key Point: I have presented only a small portion of what I actually say as I reveal the first three words. To make the revelation of each of these words more **impressive and entertaining**, I utilize some of the clever ideas presented in Banachek's *Psychological Subtleties*. (See "Books and Supplies.") Since these techniques are in print in Banachek's book, you will need to read it to learn them. Effectively using Banachek's ideas during a telepathy demonstration will help you make a much stronger impact.

Next I approach the person with **Book C**. I hand the person the pen and index card.

*Please look at and write down the first word on page 92. Don't let others see what you are writing. Just write the first word on page 92. Now, hold onto that piece of paper for a few minutes. **The repetition is deliberate.** This may seem like a small point, but I try to repeat each of the critical actions I want people to take.*

This word will be revealed during the final demonstration in my act: "Final Forecast."

Thank you. Please hold onto that piece of paper. Let's try something different. Do you work a lot with numbers? Let's also try something with numbers. Look at page 93. Let your eyes quickly scan the page. As you are scanning the page, look for a number... other than the page number. It could be a date, a year, or a dollar amount. Any number will do.

Page 93 in my **book C** contains a sentence that reads "14 Common Mistakes in Borrowing Money," printed in bold type. It is very difficult to miss this number.

Has your mind settled in on a number? Great. Please concentrate on that number. I'm getting a three... no, a two-digit number. Is that correct? One number is even, the other number odd. Is that correct? Concentrate on the even number. 2, 4, 6, 8. The even number is 4, is that correct? Now concentrate on the odd number. 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. The odd number is 1. But the number you are thinking about isn't 41; it's 14... is that correct? You may sit down now. I will get back to the word you selected in a few minutes.

I hand the person a certificate but leave the book with them.

If page 93 were selected, I would reveal the number on page 93 first. Then I ask the person to look at the opposite page (page 92) and write down the first word on page 92.

I point to someone in the audience.

Please give me a number between 1 and 200. 145? Thank you.

I approach the person with the *Insight* book.

Hello, my name is Chuck Hickok; your name is...? Karen. Please open your book to page 145. Do you work with numbers? There may not be any numbers on page 145, but quickly let your eyes and mind scan page 145 and search for numbers. It could be a date... a year... an amount of money...

Pause. I may repeat parts of my instructions. While there is a **date** or **year** on each page, it takes some people between three and ten seconds to see it. When they find it, I quickly reveal it.

If it looks like the person might not find the numbers quickly enough (or is confused), I switch to my backup. I use the information hidden in the last three lines of text on each page. This happens about thirty percent of the time. Some argue that this makes the demonstration appear more real.

Karen, forget about any numbers. There may not be any numbers on that page. Let's go with what's printed. Quickly let your eyes and mind scan the page. Great! For some reasons, the text on the lower part of the page is coming in clearer. Are you wearing bifocals? Focus on the last three or four lines on the page. Silently read the last three or four lines on the page.

*Just relax as you read those last few lines. Karen, you have a fondness for animals, don't you? Great, because what came through to me the strongest as you were looking at that page was an image of some kind of animal. There is an animal mentioned in the last few lines of text, isn't there? Picture that animal in your mind. You don't really like this animal do you? I didn't think so, because I also picked up some **tension** or **discomfort** the more you thought about this animal. Keep focusing on this animal. It's a small animal... you could hold it in one hand... but you wouldn't want to hold this animal, would you? You are thinking about a field mouse, aren't you?*

I give the person a certificate, take the book back, and walk to the center of the stage.

A few weeks ago, someone came up to me and said, "Chuck, I know how you do this. You just memorize what's on each line of each page of seven or eight books and pass

those books out in the audience." Well, I don't know if even Dunninger could memorize every page of seven or eight books. In fact, in my case, my children tell their friends that their dad has a photographic memory... but it's permanently out of film. But to prove that this isn't being done by memorization, let's make this as fair as possible.

At this point, the one person left standing is holding the *Mother of All Book Tests*. The next instructions are critical. **The person must pick a word that has seven or more letters.**

*Hello, my name is Chuck Hickok; your name is... ? Tom, please close the book. To make this demonstration as fair as possible, in a few seconds I will ask you to open the book to **any** page... and pick **any** word. But, to increase our chances of being successful, don't pick a word with just five or six letters. The more letters in the word, the more letters you and I will have to work with... and the more impressive you will look. Open the book anywhere and pick a good, long, interesting word.*

These carefully chosen words have worked for me for my last 200 shows.

Key Point: If the person starts searching for a word **before hearing my full instructions**, the odds of the person selecting a word with seven or more letters decrease. People can't do two things at once, listening to and understanding my instructions while looking for a word. I learned this lesson the hard way. When this happens, I politely ask the person to close the book. Then, I tactfully repeat my instructions.

*Tom, have you selected a good, long, interesting word? Great. To help that word sink deeper into your mind, please **silently** repeat that word to yourself two or three times. Now **silently** spell that word, letter by letter, in your mind.*

I look at the person and act like I'm picking up each letter.

Excellent, I get the feeling you really picked an interesting word. I picked up at least seven letters. Your word has at least seven letters, am I correct? Great, now close the book and keep concentrating on the word you selected.

The person's response tells me the person has a word with seven or more letters. Now **I must discover the first letter of the word**. The manuscript that comes with the *Mother of All Book Tests* contains several proven techniques for learning this letter. Here is the method I use...

*Tom, I know you have a great mind. But, let's show these people what a great mind you have. Tom, I want you to concentrate on **just the first letter** of the word you selected and send that first letter telepathically to everyone in this room. And I want each person to look at Tom and try to pick up the one letter Tom is concentrating on.*

I point to five to ten people in the audience.

What letter did you pick up? R. And you, what did you pick up? L. And you? C. And you? Nothing? That happens some times. And you? L again.

I do this as quickly as possible.

Tom, to save time, let's see who read your mind correctly. What was the first letter of your word? T... how many people picked up a T? Not that many. It's usually one

out of 26. This group must be telepathically challenged. Will everyone who had a T please stand up.

I pick up my pad, marker, and a few certificates. Tom, let's keep working with the people who read your mind. Tom, concentrate on the last letter of your word. I want each of you who correctly picked up the first letter to look at Tom and try to pick up the last letter of his word.

I know the word is "Television." I write the first and last letter of the word as large as possible on the pad, leaving space between for the remaining letters. I don't let the audience see what I have written. I continue to work with each person standing.

What letter did you pick up? E. And you, what did you pick? A. What did you pick up? B.

I give each person a chance to announce his or her letter.

Tom, I don't think anyone got it correct, did they?

I show the audience what's written on my pad.

I picked up an N. That's what your word ends with, doesn't it? Keep concentrating on that word. I will come back to you in a minute.

Now, I use an old gag to create some time misdirection. I look for a person who appears more reserved or introverted. If someone said "nothing" earlier when I asked people what letter they picked up (for the first letter of the word), I select that person.

I turn to the next page on my pad. I write the word "know," on my pad, and then point to this person.

What I will attempt to do next is one of the most difficult things I try. This may not work. If this doesn't work, it will be my fault. I just wrote down a word on my pad. I'm attempting to send that word to you telepathically. Again, if this doesn't work, it's my fault. Do you have a clear, definite impression of the word I wrote down on my pad?

As I say the last sentence, I also try to communicate non-verbally with this person by moving my head slightly left and right to signal "No." I do this very subtly, and 85 percent of the time the person says, "No."

I don't know if everyone in the audience could hear his answer. In a calm, confident, and firm voice, this person said, "Know"... the one word I was thinking of.

I quickly show the pad. There is often solid laughter. I give this person a certificate.

When I miss (the person may say, "Wish," or any other word), I quickly ask a second person if they received a clear, definite idea of the word I wrote down. Sometimes, the longer I go, the funnier it gets when people eventually see "Know" on my pad. But my goal is to hit with the first person.

*More than half of the force words in the *Mother of All Book Tests* are objects I can draw. Here is how I reveal those. (Later I'll give my presentation for the other words.)*

Tom, let's get back to work. Concentrate on the word you selected from the book. Picture all the remaining letters of that word in your mind. (Pause.) Tom, you are a visual person aren't you? You enjoy watching good films, don't you? That's what I thought, because I'm having trouble

*picking up the remaining letters of your word. Is the word you selected something you could **picture in your mind**, like a hat or a ball or a car? Let's try to determine your word in a different way.*

Forget the letters. Try to picture the word you selected in your mind. Visualize it as an object. That's much better. Now I'm starting to get it. Keep picturing it.

I quickly turn back to the page with the two letters. I draw the object and then fill in the missing letters of the word.

Tom, visualizing the word really helped. There are over 400 pages in that book, over 30,000 possible words. In a loud, clear voice, tell everyone the one word you selected to send me. "Television?" The word you tried to send me mind-to-mind was... "Television."

I show the pad.

Tom, you have a great mind, too. Let's give Tom a round of applause.

I give the person a certificate, collect the book, and return to the stage.

Note: If the word selected from *Mother of All Book Tests* can't be easily drawn, like "Illustration" or "Receptionist," I reveal the word after asking the person to concentrate on the remaining letters.

Final Thoughts

- Again, it would be possible to develop a powerful telepathy demonstration by using any one of these three book tests. Each of them comes with well-written and very complete instructions.

- About twenty percent of the time, I gather one additional piece of information as part of my pre-show. I ask a person to write down a location he or she would like to visit. Just before revealing the word from the *Mother of All Book Tests*, I reveal the selected location. It fits in perfectly because it's another demonstration of telepathy.

- I normally allow those people who end up with a book to remain in the audience. I believe they are more comfortable staying there.

- I am on stage for the first and last revelation. For all other revelations I'm in the audience, sometimes working in the round.

- I do a lot of repeating of what the participants say. I want everyone in the audience to hear what was said before I reveal the words.

- When I miss a word (often because my instructions were not clear enough), I give the person a certificate and admit that what we were trying to do is very difficult. I haven't developed the ability to connect with everyone. My fault. Thanks for helping.

- Once, when I asked a person to open the *Ultimate Flashback* to "somewhere in the middle," the person opened it to pages 16 and 17 (instead of pages 92 and 93). I took back *Ultimate Flashback*. I asked everyone to open their books to page 16 and 17. I worked with the person holding the *Insight Book*. Then, I gave the *Ultimate Flashback* to someone else to open. That person opened the book to pages 92 and 93. I asked everyone to turn to pages 92 and 93 and was back on track.

- **Things I've learned the hard way:** Don't give books to people without glasses. Don't forget to pack all the books **after** your show. (I once left the *Mother Of All Book Tests* on the table in a hotel in Omaha.) Once you learn the first letter of the word for the *Mother Of All Book Tests*, remember it. (A person once said R, and I eventually wrote down "Apartment." I don't know why. Maybe too much caffeine.)

Chapter Nine

Demonstration Five: Anything Can Be Learned

What the audience sees:

A person from the audience is taught the inner secrets of mind reading and then successfully reads the thoughts of three people from the audience.

Background and Philosophy

This is my favorite demonstration. It makes an audience member the star. And it truly stuns people. It's bold, but also relatively easy to perform. There are multiple moments of amazement. And there is ample opportunity for humor.

This demonstration is a strong entertainment piece. Success depends on how enthusiastically it is presented, not on difficult moves or memory.

And this the first time it is appearing *in print*.

The origin of this demonstration can be traced back to ideas in a *Linking Ring Parade* (November 1987, pages 81 and 82) by Dan Huffman. In his "Sins of Omission" the mentalist relies upon pre-show work and double-speak to identify the contents of three envelopes he never touched.

In this demonstration, I feed the pre-show information I gathered to an audience member **during the demonstration**. The person becomes an "instant co-conspirator" (rather than instant stooge) during the demonstration.

In addition, one of the revelations from this demonstration is used in my closing demonstration, "Final Forecast."

Methods

Before the show starts, I gather the information I need for this demonstration. My approach is covered in Chapter Four, on pre-show work.

One important secret I didn't mention earlier: When asking the person to draw a design before the show, I quickly draw a circle on the top piece of paper, and say, "Please draw your design inside this area." This controls where the design will be drawn on the paper. It also creates a **design within a design**.

I also switch ink colors. That is, I use **blue ink ballpoint** to prepare the three sheets of paper (prior to my pre-show work). When I'm explaining my instructions (during my pre-show work), I use **black ink ballpoint** to draw the circle. The same **black ballpoint** is given to the person to use. This creates the impression that the person drew **two designs** with the black ballpoint before the show.

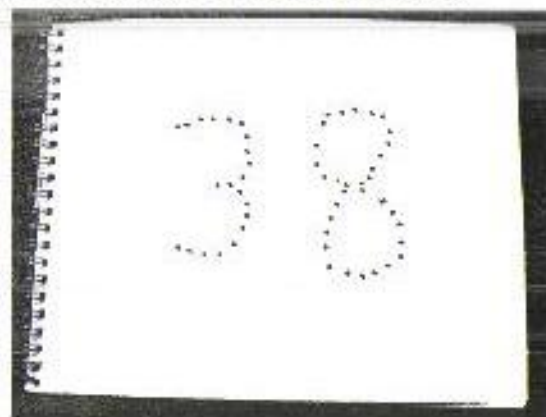
Let's say the person drew a star (inside my circle), selected the number 83, and wrote the word "Future."

I **invisibly communicate** this pre-show information to the person who helps me during my act. My method uses the drawing pad that the audience has seen me use earlier (in "Books Galore"). Before my act, I trim the upper right-hand corners of the top seven sheets of the pad (I hold the pad with the binding along the left edge, see Picture 8). This allows me to turn quickly to the eighth page.

Here is my set up for the drawing pad:

I leave the **eighth page** blank. This page will be used for the design. I don't give my helper any assistance with the design. The demonstration looks more believable when my helper looks a little uncertain. I also leave the **ninth page** blank.

I pencil-dot the number on the **tenth page**. But I **reverse the digits**. In this example, since 83 was selected before my act, I pencil-dot the number 38. The numbers are about 10 inches tall so the final number will be visible when shown to the audience. See Picture 8.



Picture 8

I pencil-dot the word "Future" on the **eleventh** page, making the letters as large as possible.

I close the pad. That's all that's necessary. Again, the trimmed corners allow me to easily locate the eighth page when needed.

Pre-Show and Materials

After my pre-show work, I search for a private location. I examine the information on the clipboard and make my pencil dots on the pad.

I check the lighting on stage to make sure people can see the number and word when connecting the pencil dots. I darken the pencil dots when necessary.

The pad is closed and placed on the table. I use the pages with the trimmed corners during my telepathy demonstration ("Books Galore").

Memory Aid: I write the name of the person who provided the pre-show information on an index card, and I place this index card on my table so I can quickly glance at it in case I forget the person's name.

Performance and Patter

Dunninger died in 1975. During the last five years of his life, he dedicated himself to teaching others how to use some of the untapped powers of their minds to learn to live more effective lives.

He taught people rapid mathematics. He taught people ways to influence other people's choices. He taught them how to use non-verbal communication to determine if people are telling the truth.

And, amazingly, he taught some people how to read minds!

Who would like to learn how to communicate mind-to-mind? I need a volunteer to come up here with me and learn how to read minds. Please raise your hand because I don't want to force anyone to come up here.

I scan the audience and carefully select a person who looks like he or she will be cooperative and able to follow instructions. Here is where real intuition comes in! I invite this person on stage.

Note: I experimented with selecting a volunteer randomly (for example, tossing a ball into the audience). It was a disaster! For some reason, many of the randomly selected people were not sharp enough to play along with the gag, or couldn't see the dots, or felt inclined to tell people about the dots. Another lesson learned the hard way.

Hello, my name is Chuck Hickok; your name is... ? Rick, in a few minutes I will teach you some of the inner secrets of mind reading.

To save time, earlier today I asked someone to help me. Will Steve Davis please stand? Steve, I want you to listen carefully and verify that everything I'm saying is true. Before the show, I asked you to write down a number, a design, and a word. You had a free choice. I didn't ask you to look at a list and select something. What you wrote down were your totally free choices. Is all of that one hundred percent accurate? And while you were doing this, I was standing ten feet away with my back turned. And while my back was still turned, you placed your word, design, and number in three separate envelopes and sealed the enve-

lopes. I never touched the envelopes. And no one but you knows what's in those envelopes. Is all of that one hundred percent correct?

Great; now, Steve, please give those envelopes to three different people sitting near you. This ensures that Rick will be working with three randomly chosen people from the audience.

I mention this because I want the entire audience to know that even if I wanted to help Rick, I really couldn't. In fact, Rick, we didn't pre-arrange anything prior to the show, did we? So, if you succeed, you will deserve all the credit; is that correct?

*Dunninger believed that three things were necessary to teach people how to read minds. You had to give people the right tools, you had to teach people the right techniques, and you had to give people **reinforcement** or praise when they were successful. Tools, techniques, and reinforcement.*

Would the three people with the envelopes please open your envelope and look at what's inside? Please don't let Rick or me see what you have. One of you will have a word, one a number, and one a design.

*Dunninger discovered that shapes or designs were easier to communicate mind-to-mind. Who has the freely chosen design? Please raise your hand. Now look at and begin concentrating on the **design that was drawn on the paper**.*

Note: The words—the design that was drawn on the paper—are important. Five percent of the time the person (looking at the design) will misunderstand my instructions and send me a different design he or she likes. People never stop amazing me.

Pick up the pad and a marker. Turn to the eighth page of the pad (using the trimmed upper-right corners as a guide). Casually hold the pad so the audience can see that the page is blank.

To read minds, you need the right tools. Rick, the only tools you will need today are your mind, the mind of the person in the audience, this pad, and a marker.

I hand the pad and marker to the person.

Rick, take the pad and marker, relax, and concentrate on the person in the audience who is trying to send you a shape or design. Trust your intuition and begin drawing. And would the person in the audience keep concentrating on the design that is drawn on the paper? Now, Rick, draw the first design or geometric shape that comes into your mind.

The person on stage with me will normally look a little perplexed. This helps the act. If necessary, to get the person to draw something, I will add, "*Just relax, trust your intuition, and draw the first shape that pops up within your mind.*"

Again, the design in the audience is a **star inside a circle**. Now, one of two things will happen:

1) **The person on stage will draw a design that matches what's inside the circle (star).** When this happens, I take the pad from the person, holding it so the audience can't see it.

This next question is carefully worded to get a "No" or "Not completely" answer from the person with the design.

Who has the design again? Is Rick's drawing exactly the same as the designs you were concentrating on? Note: I say "designs" (plural) rather than "design" (singular).

I show the design on the pad.

But Rick was close, wasn't he? Please concentrate on the entire design again. I will see if I can help Rick.

I look at the person in the audience, rock back and forth for a second or two, and then draw the circle around the star.

Is this more accurate? Thank you.

2) The person will draw a design completely different from the design inside the circle (star). When this happens, I take back the pad.

Who has the design again? Is Rick's drawing the same as the designs you were concentrating on?

I show the design on the pad.

No. That happens sometimes. Please concentrate on the design again. I will see if I can help Rick.

I look at the person in the audience, rock back and forth for a second or two, cross out Rick's design, and then draw a star inside a circle.

Is this more accurate? Thank you.

This drawing will be used in the closing demonstration, "Final Forecast." I tear off the page with the design and quickly hand it to someone in the first row. *You look stunned... here is a souvenir for you.*

I stand next to the person. I hold the pad at my side so the audience can see the blank page.

Rick, don't feel discouraged. That was my fault. I only gave you the tools. To read minds, you also need to learn the right techniques. Now, I will share with you some of the techniques or inner secrets of mind-to-mind communication. Here are some techniques that work for me.

I face the audience, place one foot in front of the other, and slowly begin to rock back and forth (as I did earlier to pick up the design). The goal of my next instructions is to get people laughing without looking too silly.

Rick, place one foot in front of the other like I have. Now, take a deep breath and relax. Now start rocking back and forth. Just do what I'm doing. Now you are getting it. This is called the "Psychic Rock." It helps you concentrate better. Keep rocking.

Rick, now clear your mind. Pause briefly. That was amazingly quick.

Caution: This line gets a good laugh, but it could cause the person on stage to turn against you. Trust your intuition. I use it about fifty percent of the time.

I casually raise the pad to chest level, as if I were about to write on it. I continue to rock.

Who has the number? Please let Rick and me see you. Please look at and concentrate on the two-digit number that is written on the piece of paper. Rick, try to pick up the two-digit number coming from the audience. The rocking is helping, isn't it?

I tear off the ninth (blank) page. I hand the pad to the person.

Rick, first focus on what's coming from the audience. And then move your focus back to the pad.

This next action is critical. I **tap the center of the page** with my hand. No one in the audience picks up on this gesture. Yet it brings the person's attention to the pencil dots. I watch the person for a reaction. I look for some signal that the person sees the dots. I often see a small smile.

Key point: Twenty percent of the people will start laughing when they see the pencil dots. As a mentalist, you must maintain control of the laughter to keep the method hidden. To influence the person to cooperate with me, I gently grab the person's arm to get their attention and say the following.

Rick, stop laughing. This is serious business. Just relax and write down the first two-digit number that you see in your mind. (I may repeat the tapping gesture to prompt the person.)

Once I see the person tracing the pencil dots, the hard work is done. When the person finishes tracing the numbers, I take the pad, keeping the number hidden.

Who has the number? In a loud clear voice, will you tell everyone the number you were trying to send. Please say the number again. 83.

38 was pencil-dotted on the pad. I show the audience 38 on the pad.

Rick received 38. Just your luck, Rick, you had a dyslexic sender.

This is a great line. And the audience is stunned that the person was this close.

One more chance left. Who has the word? Please concentrate on the one word that is written on the paper. Dunninger discovered, to be successful at reading minds, a person needs the right tools, the right techniques, and reinforcement. Don't you all agree that if Rick gets the word correct, he deserves a standing ovation? If Rick gets the word correct, will you all agree to stand and applaud wildly to recognize his skills?

These words were chosen to keep/maintain the person's cooperation. If he plays along, he is the star.

I hand the pad to the person, tearing off the page with the number. The person can see "Future" pencil-dotted.

Start rocking. The rocking helps, doesn't it? Concentrate and write down the first word that comes to your mind.

When the person is done, I take the pad back, keeping the word hidden.

Who has the word? In a loud clear voice, will you tell us all the word you were trying to send Rick? "Future?" Is the one word you were trying to send Rick "Future"? If this says "Future," we all owe Rick a standing ovation, don't we? Well, everyone on your feet for Rick!

I show the pad. I quickly pick up a certificate, give the certificate to the person and shake the person's hand. While people are applauding, I turn off my mike and whisper the following:

Rick it's important to keep our secret. The longer you keep the secret, the more people will be amazed with your abilities. Please don't tell anyone. Can I count on you to keep our secret?

Again, this demonstration stuns people. For a number of years it was my closer.

Final Thoughts

- Again, my instructions to the people in the audience are critical. Occasionally, people will think of their own designs, words, or numbers to send, rather than what's written down. It is critical to say, *"Please look at and concentrate on what is written on the paper."*

- Be sure to turn the microphone off before asking the person to keep the secret.

- About one percent of the time my intuition is wrong. I end with a person who doesn't cooperate, or doesn't see the pencil dots. I tactfully end the demonstration and thank the person for helping. I refrain from revealing the number or word myself.

- On my website (www.ChuckLickok.com), one of the video clips shows me performing this demonstration several years ago. While a few parts of the demonstration are different, you can see how much fun the audience has.

- **Things I learned the hard way:** At the end of my pre-show work, I ask the person to seal the envelope. (More than once, the person has changed what he or she put in the envelope.) Be sure the person used for the pre-show work will be staying for your entire show. (Yes, this happened once, too.)

Chapter Ten

My Closer: Final Forecast

What the Audience Sees:

An envelope is given out at the start of the show. When the envelope is opened at the end of show, it contains the performer's predictions of several free choices made during the show. All three predictions are correct.

Background and Philosophy

I believe the ability to predict the future is one of the strongest demonstrations a mentalist can perform. I have been searching for a clean, strong prediction to close my act for several years. I wanted a prediction that appeared extremely fair. I wanted a prediction I could hand out at the start of my act. I wanted to avoid switches and nail writing. And I wanted multiple moments of amazement.

Predicting the future is almost too unbelievable. People often suspect tricks. That's why I close my show with it.

Also, in my patter, I use the word "forecast," rather than "prediction." Forecasts seem more believable. People are familiar with weather forecasters, economic forecasters, etc.

And since my forecasts are written on big pieces of white cardboard, I can't be accused of switching anything or using sleight of hand. The size of the forecasts also makes it possible for **everyone to see** that my forecasts are correct when they are revealed.

This is a pure entertainment piece. There are no moves or sleights. All the work necessary to present this demonstration is done before I start.

Don't be intimidated by the methodology; this is very easy to perform once you understand what needs to be done before you step on stage.

Method

There are three different methods employed to create my forecasts.

1) Pre-Show: One forecast involves the design drawn during the pre-show activity. For example, I use the star inside the circle from the previous demonstration ("Anything Can Be Learned").

2) Word Force during the show: Another forecast comes from my telepathy demonstration ("Books Galore"). During the demonstration, a person writes down the first word on page 92 and holds onto it.

3) Something I discovered performing the Magic Square: The last forecast uses the two freely chosen numbers selected during my opener ("Einstein's Demise"). I rely upon two of a mentalist's best friends: **multiple outs** and, if necessary, a **co-conspirator**. Let's examine both.

Multiple Outs: I noticed that if I ask a person, "Please give me a number between one and eight," and then ask a second person, "Please give me a different number between one and eight," seventy-five percent of the time one of the two will say seven.

In this case, I can configure the two selected digits to create one of these five numbers:

37, 47, 57, 67, or 72

These five numbers are my multiple outs.

I have five large white envelopes on one of my tables. Inside each envelope are three 8½- by 11-inch pieces of white cardboard (identical to the cardboard used in "People Reading Plus").

One board has the design from the pre-show (circle with a star inside).

One board has the word from page 92 in **Book C** ("difficult").

One board has **one** of the five numbers (37, 47, 57, 67, or 72).

On the outside of the envelope, I write a **single digit** (3, 4, 5, 6, or 7) to indicate the number inside.

But how do you ensure that you get a seven from one of the two people?

Co-conspirator: To make sure I get a seven, I just ask someone to help me. I approach a friendly, cooperative-looking person sitting near the front a few minutes before I start. I say, *Hello, I'm Chuck Hickok. I will be on stage in a few minutes. Will you help me have some fun? I won't ask you to come on stage. All I may do is ask you for a number between one and eight. If I ask you for a number between one and eight, just say seven. That's it. Just say seven if I ask you for a number between one and eight. Will you help me have some fun?* (Again, the repetition is deliberate.)

Interestingly, 50 percent of the time I get a seven from the first person, so I don't need my co-conspirator. I then select anyone from the audience for the second number.

What happens if the co-conspirator forgets, or decides to give you a number other than seven? **It's never happened yet!**

But what will I do when (not if) it happens? Or how can I do this demonstration without a co-conspirator or multiple outs? I prepare a special **Way-Ahead Envelope** that I created for these situations. This special envelope is described at the end of this chapter. But for the time being, forget about this envelope and just keep reading.

Pre-Show and Materials

Each of the five envelopes initially contains the force word (written on an 8½- by 11-inch piece of cardboard) and one of the five numbers (written on another piece of

cardboard). These can be used from show to show and do not have to be redone for each performance.

I need to add the design (from my pre-show) to each of the five envelopes before the show. I draw the design as large as possible on five pieces of cardboard, and put one drawing in each envelope. This takes no more than five minutes.

I seal each envelope. This prevents peeking during the show.

I place the envelopes below the certificates and pad on my table. I spread them out enough to read the numbers on the corners, but keeping the stack of envelopes as small as possible.

Performance and Patter

Part One: Handing out the Forecast.

The correct envelope is handed out at the end of "Einstein's Demise."

As people are applauding after I circle the four corners, I locate the correct envelope (using the numbers on the outside of the envelopes). I tell the joke about square roots.

I had a hunch you would react that way. It must be too late in the day for that kind of humor. In fact, before I started today, I had several other hunches on how you would respond, and I put those hunches in this envelope. Please hold this for me and we will see if my hunches are accurate a little bit later.

Note: Most people can't see the top of my table. When I pick up the correct envelope, the audience has no idea

what it will be used for. And by the end of the show, the unused white envelopes are well hidden beneath the unused certificates, my books, and my drawing pad. It may seem bold to have all five outs on the table, but they are never noticed. Most of the time, my table is covered with a white tablecloth, further hiding the envelopes at the start.

Part Two: Revealing the Forecast

I wait for the applause to end from the previous demonstration ("Anything Can Be Learned").

Rick, use your new skill wisely. Sometimes it's scary to know what people are thinking.

People who have seen me do these demonstrations often ask, "Chuck, can you predict the future?" Or, "Could Dunninger predict the future?" I don't know what Dunninger would say today. But in the book I received on my tenth birthday, Dunninger's Amazing Mental Secrets, Dunninger said predicting the future was very difficult, but sometimes possible under the right conditions. One of the reasons Dunninger was world famous was his ability to make several predictions that turned out to be accurate.

However, I haven't learned how to consistently predict the future. If I could consistently predict the future, I would be living in Las Vegas, playing golf each day, and betting on sporting events to make a living. In fact, if someone ever claims they can consistently predict your future, be very, very careful. These people are normally more interested in your money than your future.

But I have discovered that I do have the ability to forecast what's likely to happen.

In fact, I've discovered that, if you study a topic long enough, it's not that difficult to make accurate forecasts. My cousin studied meteorology for six years, and now he forecasts the weather for a living. Another friend of mine has a degree in economics from Harvard, and he makes a living forecasting business trends.

Well, for the past thirty years, I've been studying human behavior. And I can often use what I've learned over the past thirty years about human behavior to forecast what will happen during my act. Let's see how close I came today. Again, I'm not always correct.

At the start of my time with you, before I did anything, I gave someone an envelope to hold.

Not completely accurate... but few people will remember when the envelope was given out during your show. Time misdirection helps you to make the important claim.

Who has the envelope? Please hold up the envelope. Have you looked inside?

I take the envelope, keeping it above my head as I return back to the stage.

Last night, I had several hunches about what would happen during my time with you today. Just a few minutes ago, someone from the audience tried to send Rick a freely chosen design. Rick came close. Who has the paper with the correct design?

I point to the person in the front who has the piece of paper with the design.

Please stand and show the people. A star inside a circle.

Note: It is important to remind the audience what design was drawn.

Well, last night, as I was preparing to be with you today, I had a hunch about the design that would be selected today.

I reach in the envelope and pull out the design. I show it to the entire audience. I drop the cardboard on the stage. I do this to communicate the fact that the cardboard isn't gaffed.

I point to the flip chart used for "Einstein's Demise."

Also, two people selected numbers for my demonstration of rapid mathematics. Would those two people raise their hands? What number did you give me? Four? Was that a totally free choice? We didn't talk before the show? And you gave me a seven, I didn't call you last night and ask you to say seven, did I? Thank you.

There is enough double-speak in that last paragraph to provide cover even if you used a co-conspirator.

Well, last night I also had a hunch about what random number would be created by two people from the audience. There are 100 possibilities. But, for some reason, 47 was my hunch for today.

I take out the cardboard with 47. Again, I make sure to show the number to the entire audience. I also drop this cardboard on the stage.

Someone also freely selected a word from a book and wrote down that word earlier. Where is that person? Please stand. Before I ask you what word you selected, did we talk

any time before tonight? We didn't prearrange anything, did we? This is the scary part for me because I know there are over 10,000 words in that book. In a loud clear voice, please tell everyone the one word you wrote down. "Difficult." You selected and wrote down just one word: "Difficult."

I reach into the envelope and take out the last piece of cardboard keeping the word hidden. I let the empty envelope fall to the floor. I pause to build the anticipation.

I show the cardboard to the entire audience and accept their applause.

This demonstration amazes people. It's almost too unbelievable. It's a great way to end my act.

I close the act with my disclaimer, which can be found in Chapter Eleven. I'm an entertainer. My disclaimer contains what I'm comfortable saying to close my act.

Final Thoughts

- Pre-show work could be substituted for the book force. And the number could be forced by using any *Add-A-No* device.

- Rather than dropping the boards, I sometimes place them on the tray of the flip chart stand (or tape them to the flip chart stand) to keep my forecasts visible after revealing them.

- If my co-conspirator gives me a number other than seven, I use the **Way-Ahead Envelope**, which I mentioned earlier. Again, this has never happened. But I'm sure it will someday. Here is how to make and use my **Way-Ahead Envelope**.

Hickok's Way-Ahead Envelope

For the performer who doesn't want to use a co-conspirator (or doesn't want to create live outs for each show), here is a method I developed. It will require a visit to an office supply store.

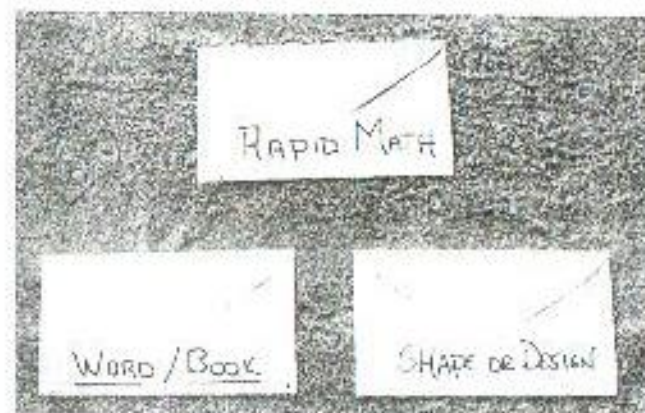
Pre-Show and Materials

I use four envelopes. Three envelopes are 3-5/8 by 6-1/2 inches. I use standard white security envelopes. I prepare these envelopes as follows:

Envelope 1: On the flap side, along the bottom of the envelope, I write **Word/Book** with a black Sharpie marker. Inside this envelope I put a piece of white cardboard (or an index card) cut to fit. Written on the cardboard is the word from page 92 of **Book C** ("Books Galore"). Example: "Difficult will be selected." I write "Difficult" as big as possible.

Envelope 2: On the flap side, along the bottom of the envelope, I write **Shape or Design** with a black Sharpie marker. Inside this envelope I place another piece of cardboard. Drawn on the cardboard are the shapes learned from the pre-show, and revealed during my last demonstration ("Anything Can Be Learned"). Example: a circle with a star inside.

Envelope 3: On the flap side, along the bottom of the envelope, I write **Rapid Math** with a black Sharpie marker. Inside this envelope, I place another piece of cardboard. Written on the cardboard is "_____ will be selected." I will fill in the blank after my opening demonstration ("Einstein's Demise").



Picture 9. Flap sides of smaller envelopes

The fourth and final envelope is a standard-size letter envelope (4-1/8 by 9-1/2 inches). This envelope is either blue or green, so people can see a contrast between the smaller white envelopes and this one. Here I refer to this envelope as the *colored envelope*.

I place Envelope 1 and Envelope 2 back to back (flap side to flap side) to hide the writing. I put these inside the colored envelope. I place Envelope 3 on the **outside** of the colored envelope, with the flap side of Envelope 3 touching the address side of the colored envelope. I use a large paperclip to hold Envelope 3 to the colored envelope.

I place this **Way Ahead Envelope** in my inside left coat pocket.

Performance and Patter

To use the **Way-Ahead Envelope**, I rely upon pure deception and double-speak. There are no moves, just some carefully chosen words and some natural actions. The handling of the envelopes is fair. Nothing is hidden from the audience. All three white envelopes remain in sight at all times. **Study this carefully.** After a few tries, it will seem very natural.

Part One: Handing out the Envelope

While people are applauding at the end of "Einstein's Demise," I remove the **Way Ahead Envelope** from my coat pocket. I tell the square root joke.

I had a hunch you would react that way. It must be too late in the day for that kind of humor. In fact, before I started today, I had some other hunches on how you would respond. ...

I put the set of envelopes in my left (non-writing) hand. I hold it between the thumb and index finger. I keep the flap side of the colored envelope toward my body. I make sure the top (long edge with flap) of the envelope is facing the right side of the stage. With my right hand, I remove Envelope 1 and Envelope 2 from the colored envelope.

*... and I put those hunches in these two envelopes. After having the opportunity to work with you for a while, I have one additional hunch, a **word** that will be selected by one of you.*

I place Envelope 1 and Envelope 2 between the third and fourth finger of my left hand. See Picture 10. With my right hand, I remove Envelope 3 from under the paperclip

and place the envelope, flap side up, on top of the flap of the colored envelope I'm holding in my left hand. As I do this, I'm careful not to expose the writing on the flap side of Envelope 3. I open the flap. I pull the cardboard about half way out. See Picture 11.

*In fact, a little bit later, several people will select words from books. I'm writing down my hunch about a **word** I suspect will be selected by one of these people. I could be wrong on this one.*



Picture 10.
Before removing



Picture 11.
Filling in numbers

I write the two numbers from "Einstein's Demise" on the top line of the pre-written prediction. With my right hand, I place Envelope 3 on top of Envelope 1 and Envelope 2. Again, I'm careful not to let people see the writing on the flap side of Envelope 3. Using my right hand, I place all three envelopes back into the colored envelope.

Later we will see if my hunches were correct. This doesn't always work. Would you please hold these for me? Thank you. And please don't look inside until I ask you.

I hand the colored envelope to an audience member to hold.

Part Two: Revealing the Forecast

To reveal the forecasts at the end of the show, I invite the person with the envelope to stand next to me on stage. I ask the person to remove the three smaller envelopes. I point out that one envelope deals with a word, one a design, and one a number.

Last night, I had a hunch about the design that would be selected today. It was sealed in the envelope since last night. Let's take the design first. During the show, someone from the audience selected a design to send to Rick. Who has the design we drew? Please stand and show the design to the entire audience. A star inside a circle.

Ask the person to open the design envelope and show it to the audience.

I handle the revelations of the number and word in a similar manner.

I remind people that they all saw me write down my hunch about the word at the start of my show.

Final Thoughts: Way-Ahead Envelope

- If you want to perform this demonstration without multiple outs and/or a co-conspirator, prepare and use my **Way-Ahead Envelope**. This method is bold and simple.

- Time misdirection works in your favor. Many people will leave remembering all three envelopes being in the audience since the start of the show. Since the envelopes

are ungaffed, everything can be retained by the person who helps you reveal your forecasts.

- The only real drawback is **visibility**. Having the forecasts on 8½- by 11-inch pieces of cardboard allows everyone to easily see that you are accurate, even when performing for up to 300 people. And the larger envelopes and pieces of cardboard make everything seem fairer.

- Also, if you use the smaller envelopes, some people may erroneously suspect sleight of hand, or switching of the envelopes. People are naturally suspicious about smaller items.

- Because visibility and fairness are very important to me, I currently perform this demonstration with the multiple outs. But I also prepare a **Way-Ahead Envelope** as a precaution should my co-conspirator fail me.

Chapter Eleven

My Disclaimer

Each mentalist uses a very personal approach to the disclaimer.

Some mentalists say nothing. Many mentalists make a statement that acknowledges that he or she has no special or supernatural powers. Each mentalist is perfectly free to end his or her show any way he or she feels is best. As always, there are no absolutes.

I want to leave my corporate audiences with a positive, inspirational message. I also want my disclaimer to be consistent with the act people have just experienced. My disclaimer communicates what I hope people will remember after I leave the stage.

I was hired as an entertainer. I'm comfortable telling audience members this **at the end of my act**. I don't believe that admitting I'm an entertainer diminishes the entertainment value of my act.

But, I also want my corporate audiences to understand and remember that the amazing demonstrations they saw me perform were done by using mental abilities many of them currently possess and could develop if they wanted.

My disclaimer has changed over the years. As I get more comfortable with my style of performing mentalism, I'm becoming more comfortable with my disclaimer.

Some of you may be wondering, "What's going on here?"

Well, shortly after rediscovering and reading the book on Dunninger my grandfather gave me on my tenth birthday, one of my dreams became training my mind to duplicate what Dunninger learned to do with his mind.

And, as some of you may have guessed, Joseph Dunninger became world famous as an entertainer. Dunninger was not only a memory expert. Dunninger was also a math expert. And Dunninger was also an illusionist.

*Dunninger not only presented fascinating demonstrations of genuine mental abilities, Dunninger also perfected and presented **illusions of the mind** to entertain audiences around the world.*

Some of what you have seen me do today were actual demonstrations of genuine mental abilities that anyone in this audience could learn. And some of what you have seen today were illusions of the mind I learned by studying the life and times of Joseph Dunninger. I will let you discuss and decide for yourselves which demonstrations you believe were real, and which were illusions.

*Some of you may ask yourselves, "**How** did Chuck do these demonstrations?" Others with a little more wisdom may ask, "**Why** does Chuck do these demonstrations?"*

*I can't tell you how I did these demonstrations... other than to say that **everything you saw** was accomplished as a result of my dedicating myself to locating and completing advanced training in memory techniques, mathematics, psychology, communications, and the magical arts. I truly believe that almost anyone here who has the proper motivation and the proper training could—with ten years of practice—learn to perform some of these demonstrations.*

*But let me explain **why I did** these demonstrations.*

One reason I did these demonstrations was to add some real fun, excitement, and amazement to this event. (I often add some specific comments about the purpose or goal of the event.)

*But I also did these demonstrations to remind each of you to **never give up on your dreams**.*

*It's never too late to start pursuing your dreams. I didn't begin training my mind to duplicate what Dunninger did until I was over fifty years old. Learning these demonstrations **required hard work**. Learning these demonstrations required **taking some big risks**. And, like Dunninger, I almost gave up several times along the way.*

*But I discovered the **real magic in life** comes from **pursuing our dreams**.*

It has been a real privilege to be with you today. I hope each of you enjoyed these demonstrations and, more im-

portantly, I hope each of you continues to use your mental abilities to pursue your dreams.

Everything in my disclaimer is true. I let my audience members determine the actual meaning of these words. That's part of the fun of performing mentalism for corporate audiences.

Chapter Twelve

Three Bonus Demonstrations

I often present one or more of these next three demonstrations when a client requests more than a 45-minute act, or when I am invited back to do a repeat performance for the same audience.

Each demonstration is an entertaining, impressive display of a believable mental ability. In addition, each can be performed as a stand-alone demonstration of your mental abilities.

I hope you enjoy these three demonstrations as much as I do.

Bonus Demonstration One: Learning The Almost Impossible

What The Audience Sees:

The performer teaches the audience how to do something that seems impossible: learning to say the alphabet backward in less than five minutes.

Background and Philosophy

I enjoy demonstrations that allow audience members to test their mental abilities. Psychological forces are one common way mentalists can reach out to everyone. And, when done well, psychological forces create an experience that's fun, interesting, and amazing. These forces often cause more audience members to believe that they may possess some untapped mental abilities.

This demonstration takes more time than most standard psychological forces. But people actually learn a new mental ability they can show their friends the next day. This is free advertising. In fact, the mnemonic I use could be printed on the back of your business card and given to each person in the audience.

The purpose of teaching people to say the alphabet backward is to **let people experience that they have more mental ability than they realize**. Once people experience success for themselves, they are more likely to believe the other claims I make during my act.

As I teach people how to say the alphabet backward, I always try to make it fun. When audience members succeed, I applaud. When people fail, I tell them they were very close. I sometimes give out small gifts.

I present this demonstration to show off the audience's ability to learn, not to show off my abilities. I'm just their guide.

I have also used this demonstration when hired as a speaker or trainer to reinforce the concept that learning the secrets or shortcuts discovered by others can improve one's effectiveness. It is a very effective, memorable way to begin a talk on almost any topic.

Method

You must learn the mnemonic in the handout in the Appendix (Item 6). It is very easy to learn. Next, you must learn to teach the mnemonic to others.

I suggest beginning by practicing this demonstration with people on a one-to-one basis or in small groups to build your confidence and to fine-tune your presentation.

Key Point: This demonstration will not impress people unless they can see the letters of the alphabet. Always **show** the letters of the alphabet when performing this demonstration (and also when practicing it for others).

Pre-Show Work

Before the show, I print the alphabet on a page in the middle of the flip chart pad. I make my letters as large as possible so the entire audience can see the letters. To help

people eventually visualize my mnemonic, I use a layout with four lines of letters:

ABC DEF
GHIJ KLM
NOPQ R STUV
WX YZ

I put a piece of masking tape on the side of the page (to create a tab) so I can quickly flip to this page when I need it. I turn the pad back to the top sheet so the audience can't see the alphabet.

I bring copies of my handout as gifts for people, and also as a way to get my name into their hands.

Performance and Patter

Dunninger was world famous for his abilities to teach people new, creative ways to use their minds to do things that seem almost impossible. Here's something that appears very difficult to most people. I learned it from the Dunninger book my grandfather gave me on my tenth birthday. It involves memory skills.

I turn to the page that displays the alphabet.

*I'm sure that each of you, at an early age, learned to say the alphabet **forward**. But how many of you have learned how to say the alphabet **backward**? What exactly do I mean by "say the alphabet backward"? This is what I mean: listen and see if I miss a letter.*

I say the alphabet backward. I use a pace that's rather fast, but slow enough for people to **hear me** and also **check**

the flip chart to determine if I missed a letter. I normally take 8-10 seconds.

How long do you think it would take you to learn how to say the alphabet backward?

I ask this question of several people. I often get answers that range from a week to an hour. After repeating a few answers, I repeat an answer that may seem difficult.

This person said thirty minutes. How many people believe you could learn how to say the alphabet backward in less than thirty minutes? Please raise your hands... not too many. How many people believe they could learn how to say the alphabet backward in less than fifteen minutes? Please raise your hands... only about five percent of the audience. Let's see if we can get some of you saying the alphabet backward in the next five minutes.

*What each of you needs is a new method for training your mind to remember things. Dunninger was one of the first memory experts to teach people how to use **mnemonics** to enhance their memories. A mnemonic is a vivid picture you create in your mind. The wilder the picture, the higher your chances for success.*

In your mind, picture a hundred-year-old ex-Viking warrior named Zeewhy. Make your picture as vivid as possible. Picture an old Viking... picture the ex-warrior wearing Viking horns and holding a beat-up old sword. And also picture at his feet his pets: his cute baby alligators. Zeewhy's hobby was raising cute baby alligators.

Next, I alternate between asking prompting questions, repeating audience members' answers (so everyone can hear

the correct answer) and giving people more of the mnemonic. **The more questions I ask, the quicker the audience learns the mnemonic.**

What's the ex-warrior's name? Zeewhy. What's this ex-warrior's hobby? Raising cute baby alligators. And since Zeewhy is so old, he has a bad memory and bad eyesight. His wife has given him a coupon and asked him to go the store. But, because of his poor eyesight, he can't read the coupon in his hand.

What's the ex-warrior's name? Zeewhy. What's this ex-warrior's hobby? Raising cute baby alligators. And since he can't read the coupon Zeewhy asks his wife, "Vut's our coupon for?" What's the ex-warrior's name? Zeewhy. What's this ex-warrior's hobby? Raising cute baby alligators. What question does he ask his wife? "Vut's our coupon for?"

His wife answers, "Milk Jugs, to feed the cute baby alligators." What question does Zeewhy ask his wife? "Vut's our coupon for?" What's her answer? "Milk jugs, to feed the cute baby alligators." What's the ex-warrior's name? Zeewhy. What's this ex-warrior's hobby? Raising cute baby alligators.

At this point, some people will see the pattern on the flip chart and begin to smile and point out the pattern they see to others.

How many of you see the pattern?

I now pick up a marker, ask my prompting questions, and **draw boxes** around the letters as they answer my questions.

What's the ex-warrior's name? Zeewhy. I draw a box around Z and Y.

What is Zeewhy? An ex-warrior. I draw a box around X and W.

What question does he ask his wife? "Vut's our coupon for?" I draw a box around V, U, T, and S, then a box around R, then a box around Q, P, O, and N.

*What is her answer? Milk jugs. I draw a box around M, L, and K and then a box around J, I, H, and G. This is the Scandinavian spelling. (This often gets a laugh.) M, L, and K for milk; and J, I, H, and G for jugs. **This is the only hard part.** M, L, K... J, I, H, G.*

What were the milk jugs for? To feed the cute baby alligators. I draw a box around F, E, and D and then C, B, and A.

Now let's all try together without looking up here. Z, Y, X, W, V...

Now who thinks he or she can do it alone?

I quickly go from person to person, giving several people a chance to say the alphabet backward. I let them volunteer. The first volunteer often will get it correct or be very close. I help them if they get stuck by repeating the prompting questions used earlier.

When the first person gets it correct, I say, *Fantastic. You've got a great mind. And that was only four minutes. I know many of you are very close. Who else thinks they can do it?*

After two or three more people say the alphabet backward correctly, I return to the stage.

Not bad for just five minutes. If we took another ten minutes to practice, how many of you believe you would be able to say the alphabet backward? Please raise your hand if you think you could say the alphabet backward with ten more minutes of practice?

More than fifty percent of the audience will raise their hands. I now compare that percentage against the five percent who raised their hands earlier to make my point.

That's a lot more people than I had when I asked you earlier if you could learn to say the alphabet backward in fifteen minutes. Earlier it looked like only five percent of the hands went up. Now it's more than fifty percent. Why are there a lot more hands in the air now?

*That's right. You discovered a new way to use your existing mental capabilities. You learned a **short cut**. And once you mastered this **short cut**, your confidence went up.*

This exercise reminds us that if we believe we can do more with our minds, and search for the short cuts others have discovered, there are many other amazing things we can train our minds to do.

Dunninger became famous because he discovered and taught people short cuts for using their minds to do things that look extremely difficult.

Don't sell your existing mental abilities short. Believe you can do more. Search out the secrets others have discovered. And then practice what you have learned.

Lasting success requires practicing the short cuts you discover. To help you practice this simple short cut, here is a handout that has the mnemonic you just learned. Use this handout to practice saying the alphabet backward twice a day for two weeks, and you will remember it for life.

Here's an optional conclusion: *By the way, being able to say the alphabet backward has no great socially redeeming value. But it is a great way to exercise your mind each day. I believe that the more a person exercises his or her mind each day, the longer that person will retain a sound, healthy mind. And some people have told me that saying the alphabet backward also comes in handy if you are ever stopped late at night—by the police—driving a car under suspicion of having been "over-served."*

Final Thoughts

- This demonstration often runs between seven and ten minutes. I try to end it as quickly as possible after two or three people say the alphabet backward correctly.

- **Seeing** the alphabet backward can aid the learning process. Before I draw the boxes, I sometimes show another page on the flip chart that displays the alphabet backward. I draw the boxes on this page to help more people pick up on the mnemonic. This presentation requires preparing one additional sheet before the show.

- E-mail me at ChuckHickok@aol.com if you want to use the handout I have created. I will e-mail it to you in Word format.

Bonus Demonstration Two: State of Mind

What The Audience Sees:

The performer shows a set of flashcards for the fifty U.S. states. The performer attempts to mentally transmit the name of one of the fifty states to a woman in the audience. The woman announces the name of the state she received. The performer shows that each of the state flashcards has a different woman's name written on it... no duplicate names. And, to prove that the woman read the performer's mind, written on the flashcard for the one state the woman selected is her own first name.

Background and Philosophy

This demonstration was inspired by a very strong playing-card effect called "The Dream," created by Denny Laub and Gary Inglese. This clever routine was initially published in Bascom Jones's *Magick*. It can be found on page 1617 of the unbound issues of *Magick*, and on page 309 of Volume III of the Collector's Workshop bound edition. It can also be found in Laub and Inglese's book, *The Smagorad*, published by Abbott's Magic.

"The Dream" is direct and easy to perform. And initially "The Dream" was part of my corporate mentalism act. But as I moved away from using playing cards, it was replaced by other demonstrations of telepathy.

In the last few years, I began searching for a way to capture the simplicity and impact of "The Dream" without using playing cards (or postcards). My solution is to replace the playing cards with a set of flashcards of the fifty states.

Are flashcards of the states unnatural props? Do they look out of place? Yes, to some degree. I suspect some people will be suspicious of them. But I believe I have created an entertaining presentation that makes the presence of the flashcards seem natural.

This is another strong demonstration that is ninety percent presentation. The card handling is very simple.

I use this demonstration for repeat performances. It is a quick, amazing demonstration of the spectator's telepathic ability to read my mind. It is a natural follow-up to a series of quick psychological forces.

Method

Each time I perform this effect, it costs about \$4.00. The demonstration uses one set of State Flashcards that can't easily be reused.

The place where I purchase my sets of state flashcards is www.TrendEnterprises.com. (I go to the *Products* page and type in "State Flashcard" in the *Keyword* search box. I use *Item Number* T-23014.) I buy a dozen sets at a time. Performers outside the USA may be able to locate similar flashcards from firms selling school-teaching supplies in their parts of the world.

Before the day of my show, I must learn the first name of a woman who will be at my performance.

Next I prepare the **two decks** used in this demonstration. Part of the method comes from using two decks, **but the audience only sees one deck**.

Names must be written on each flashcard. Preparation time is 15–20 minutes.

Divide one deck of state cards alphabetically.

States that begin with A through M go into **Stack 1**, and states that begin with N through W go into **Stack 2**.

Write a different woman's name on the back (the side with the detailed printed information) of each state flashcard in **Stack 1**, *except the cards for Hawaii and Alaska*. (Example: On Arizona write *Judy*, on Alabama write *Fran*, on Minnesota write *Betsy*, etc.) Write the names lengthwise on the flashcard. Use a broad tip Magic Marker so the audience can see the names when they are shown during the effect.

Next, write the same women's names (those written on **Stack 1**) on the flashcards in **Stack 2**. (Example: Judy, Fran, Betsy, etc.)

You will re-use these cards (**Stack 1** and **Stack 2**) each time you perform the effect.

Divide a second deck of state cards alphabetically.

States that begin with A through M go into **Stack R** (for right side), and states that begin with N through W go into **Stack L** (for left side).

Write the selected female audience member's name on the back of each card in **Stack R** and **Stack L**, *except the Hawaii and Alaska cards*.

Shuffle each of these four stacks **separately**. Now create the two *face-up* (**picture side up**) decks as follows:

Deck Left (for states N to W)	Deck Right (for states A to M)
Stack L (top)	Stack R (top)
Stack 1	Stack 2
Hawaii (bottom)	Hawaii (bottom)

The Hawaii flashcards are used to hide the names written on **Stack 1** and **Stack 2**.

The Alaska flashcards can be placed about twenty states from the bottom of **Stack 1** and **Stack 2** to remind you that you have only three or four flashcards left with different names.

Pre-Show Work

A few days before the show, I learn the name of a woman who will be at my show. I ask my host to identify a person who is a good sport and well liked. I emphasize that I need the name of someone who will definitely attend the event.

I prepare the decks before leaving for the show, using that person's name.

I place **two or three rubber bands** around each deck to keep the flashcards together. The rubber bands also prevent the person from examining the deck during the routine.

Before the show, I have my host point out the woman whose name is on the card.

I place **Deck Right** in my right inside coat pocket. I place **Deck Left** in my left inside coat pocket. Or, when I work without a coat, I find two other logical places where I can place the decks that will be out of view of the audience. My goal is to have people remember that only one deck was used.

Routine and Patter

I start this demonstration by using two or three standard psychological forces. After my final psychological force, I say the following.

*For the last part of this demonstration, I will transmit the **name of a state** to just one person. This may not work. The odds are fifty to one against it. I need to find someone who has been successful in the last few demonstrations. You look like an ideal person. My name is Chuck Hickok... and your name is... ?*

I approach the **woman whose name is on the cards** regardless of her success in the previous psychological forces. If I noticed she was successful in the tests, I ask about her "successes." If she wasn't successful, I just proceed without saying anything.

Let's say the person's name was Molly. I invite Molly on stage, and position her on my right side.

Molly... what a nice name. I knew another Molly a long time ago. We wrote each other several times when I was in eighth grade. That wasn't you, was it?

*Molly, to make this demonstration fair and interesting, and because your name is Molly, I will send you the name of the state where that **other** Molly lived. All you need to do to be successful is relax and try to pick up my thoughts.*

*To make this a little easier, the state the other Molly lived in wasn't Hawaii or Alaska. Relax. Try to pick up the name of state I'm sending. Please concentrate like you did in the other tests. Did one of the states pop up in your mind? To see if we came close to connecting, tell me just the **first letter of the state you picked up**. What letter of the alphabet does the state you received from me begin with?*

M. You picked up a state that begins with M? Who else picked up a state that begins with M?

This is a key question. As soon as the letter is confirmed, **remove the correct deck**.

If the selected state begins with A through M, remove the **Right Deck**. If the selected state begins with N through W, remove the **Left Deck**.

In this example, I remove the **Right Deck**. As people try to reconstruct this demonstration later, most will remember the deck as being visible from the start of the routine.

Excellent! Molly, believe it or not, the state where the other Molly lived began with M. I could tell you had a fine mind. Again, there are 48 states you could have received. Somewhere in this set of flashcards is a flashcard for the state I sent you.

*Molly, tell everyone the name of the **state that begins with M** that popped into your mind. Michigan.*

These specific words were selected to remind Molly that she thought of a state that begins with M. Occasionally, the spectator forgets this critical point.

Molly, that's amazing. The other Molly I wrote letters to in eighth grade also lived in Michigan. That's why I sent you the state of Michigan. If your name had been Karen, I would have sent you a different state.

Hand the flashcards to the person.

Please hold these for me. In fact, I was given this set of flashcards when I attended the 40-year reunion of my eighth-grade class a few months ago.

I sometimes comment on the year 1957. It's fun to remind people of the many things that didn't exist forty years ago.

In fact, when I was in eighth grade, my English teacher was Mabel Marie Hatch. Back then, Mabel was 23 and, in my opinion, Mabel was really hot. Mabel was also one of the best teachers at our school because she made learning fun.

Mabel believed that writing letters was a good way to teach us grammar, spelling, and penmanship. In fact, Mabel would show us letters she received from her friends around the world. These people were her "pen pals."

Molly, have you heard the term "pen pals" before? This was way before e-mail and the Internet. To make learning fun, Mabel encouraged each of us to write letters to as many pen pals as possible.

*To motivate us, she offered a \$100 Savings Bond to the person who received letters from pen pals from the **greatest number of different states**.*

Well, when I was in eighth grade I was seriously "dexterity-impaired." But this looked like a competition I could win. And, because of my raging hormones, I decided to write only to girls. Also, I figured girls would be more likely to write back than boys. My goal was to receive a letter from a girl from each of the 48 states and win the contest. This was before Hawaii and Alaska were states.

*After two weeks I had letters from 22 states; after three weeks, I had letters from 36 states. And, by the end of the contest, I was the only person who had received letters from **all 48 states**. I won the contest, and still have the \$100 Savings Bond.*

And, believe it or not, when I went to my fortieth reunion, Mabel Hatch, my eighth grade teacher, was also there. And she still looks rather hot. Mabel told me I was the only one of her students to ever get a pen pal from each of the 48 states. In fact, Mabel still had a list of the names of the 48 girls that wrote me.

To prove she remembered the names, Mabel gave me the set of flashcards you are holding. Please give them back to me.

Now for the card handling. No real moves or sleights. The handling is very natural, but requires a little practice to do correctly. **Study the next seven paragraphs carefully.**

I remove the rubber bands from the deck. I hold the stack in my left hand, picture side up, about chest high. My

goal is to move the flashcards, one at a time, from my left hand to my right hand until I come to the state named by Molly. I must do this in a way that prevents anyone seeing the names written on the back side of the flashcards. I find it easier to slide each new flashcard I show **on top of the flashcards** I have already moved to my right hand. Based on the size of your hands, find the handling that works best for you. Make your handling look natural.

I hold the flashcards close to my body. If there is a strong light behind me, the names on the backs may be seen through the cards.

You mentioned that you received the state of Michigan from me. We didn't set this up ahead of time, did we? Great. Watch for the flashcard for the state of Michigan. There should only be one Michigan flashcard in this set. Here is Alabama, here is Illinois, and so on.

I continue showing and naming the flashcards, picture side up, until Molly (and the audience) sees the Michigan flashcard. When I come to the Michigan flashcard, I grasp this flashcard by the corner closest to me, using my right thumb and index finger. I hold the Michigan flashcard above the flashcards I am already holding in my right hand.

Next, I get rid of the flashcards I'm currently holding in my right hand. I place them back on the stack of flashcards in my left hand. I keep these flashcards picture side up.

Keeping the Michigan flashcard picture side up, I hand it to Molly.

Molly, please hold out one of your palms. I'm going to place the Michigan flashcard on your palm. Now please put your other hand over the Michigan flashcard and keep your hands together for the next few minutes. We will prove to these people that you do have a special gift. Will you keep your hands together?

I encourage you to practice these simple actions until they look and feel natural. Adjust the actions to accommodate the size of your hands.

Next, I turn the flashcards in my left hand over so I can start showing the entire audience the names on their backs.

Molly, these people still may not believe you actually read my mind. Let's prove to them that Michigan was the state I was thinking of.

What makes these flashcards special is that my eighth-grade teacher, Mabel Hatch, wrote the name of each girl on the backs of the cards. Again, in all her years of teaching, no one else ever got pen pals from all 48 states.

No pen pal from Hawaii. Hawaii wasn't a state then. My pen pal from Texas was Sally. Nebraska was Donna B. South Carolina was Donna W. There were a few Donnas back then. Vermont was Kathy..."

I normally drop the cards on the floor (or onto a table in the audience) to communicate that the flashcards are normal. As I do this, I watch Molly to make sure she keeps her hands together. If necessary, I give her a polite verbal reminder about keeping her hands together. The ending of this effect is ruined if Molly looks before I ask her to.

I read the state names and girl names from about 15–20 flashcards. This helps create the illusion that all 48 flashcards have different names. If I come to the **Alaska** flashcard, I know I have only two or three different names left.

North Dakota was Maria. (Pause.) I had only one Molly as a pen pal. She was from Michigan. That's why I decided to send you Michigan today. To prove that you truly read my mind, Molly, show people the name on the Michigan flashcard.

I thank Molly for her help and tell her to keep the card as proof of her telepathic ability.

Final Thoughts

- **No state** begins with the letter B, E, I, Q, X, or Z. Also, H won't work because the Hawaii card isn't used. You may need to politely remind some spectators of this fact if one of these letters is named as the first letter of the state.

- If the name of your pre-identified woman (Molly) is one of the names already written on **Stack 1** and **Stack 2**, simply remove these two cards. These cards can be reinserted into the deck the next time you perform the effect.

- When I drop the flashcards on the floor, I leave them on the floor until the end of my show. It is awkward to pick them up in the middle of the show. I often toss them toward the right side of the stage rather than the middle of the stage. I am less likely to walk over them.

- As you read a few of the state names, you have an opportunity for some humor if it fits your performing style. Example: *Penny was from Nebraska. Penny wrote that her goal in life was to make lots of money. Last I heard she was very successful at reaching that goal. She's now working at the Denver Mint.*

- This demonstration is one example of how a classic card effect can be transformed into an impressive mentalism demonstration that's suitable for corporate audiences. The next demonstration in this book is another classic of mentalism that initially relied upon playing cards.

Bonus Demonstration Three: Mega-Memory Miracle

What The Audience Sees:

Forty-eight symbol cards, each with a different drawing, colored dot, and number on it, are fairly mixed by several audience members. The performer takes back the cards, divides them into two sets, and attempts to memorize each set. Then, after some discussion about memory skills, the performer calls off the drawings, colors, and numbers in each set of cards.

Background and Philosophy

This routine is based on Bob Cassidy's "Memorized Deck Routine" from his *The Art of Mentalism II*. Bob is one of mentalism's finest performers, and anyone who is serious about mentalism should study everything he has

written. Bob's clever routine is a very convincing display of the "untapped powers of the human mind." It's believable, and yet it impresses audiences.

I learned Bob's routine, and performed it several times for corporate audiences. However, the more I performed for corporate audiences as a mentalist, the more I felt it was important for me to remove playing cards from my act completely. As I mentioned earlier, I believe that when audience members see playing cards, some immediately think "card trick" or "magic trick."

But Bob's routine was too good to toss aside just because it used playing cards! I began looking for believable substitutes for the playing cards. I created a deck of symbol cards that can be introduced to a corporate audience as a tool for developing a better memory.

In my collection of old props and supplies, I ran across a set of 32 laminated symbol cards (3½ inches square) that came with "Extra Sensory Perception," sold by Mark Strivings. Each card displays an easy-to-recognize drawing or symbol.

I made three modifications to these cards to make them suitable for a memory demonstration similar to Bob's "Memorized Deck Routine."

- First, to help people **sort the cards**, I placed two adhesive "colored dots" (upper-left corner and lower-right corner) on each card. I used four different colors: red, blue, green, and yellow. (They are Avery ¾-inch Multi-color dots, #05472.)

- Second, to help people quickly **hand me the cards** during the routine, I wrote a number on each dot. I used numbers from 1 to 48, skipping some numbers.

- Third, I added eight additional symbol cards to Mark's original 32 cards. I made these cards a quarter-inch shorter than Mark's cards, making them **short cards**. These **short cards** make getting a break—the one card move during the demonstration—extremely simple.

Next, after studying the 32 drawings that came with Mark's routine, I searched for a logical way to separate them into groups.

- First, I divided the deck into **two stacks of cards**.
- Next, I divided each stack into **four groups** of cards. I assigned a color to each of these four groups.
- Last, I assigned a number to each card using a method that I could remember.

My system for grouping the cards can be found near the end of this chapter. This demonstration requires memorizing eight groups of cards. Study it. Practice it three times a day for two weeks and you should be ready to perform this demonstration.

Use my system or create your own drawings and memory system. In fact, if **you** create them yourself, **your drawings** will be easier for **you** to remember.

Don't let the memory work scare you away. It's only a little tougher than the *MOAB* or Bob's playing card routine. This routine, with the right presentation, can be a closer!

Method

The deck consists of **two stacks** of 16 cards. I call these **Stack A** and **Stack B**. The mentalist has memorized the cards in each stack.

As in the Cassidy routine, the mentalist handles the cards such that the cards from **Stack A** are never mixed with the cards from **Stack B**.

This demonstration uses the 32 symbol cards (from *Extra Sensory Perception*) plus 8 short cards. And, to make these cards appear more professional, Mark has recently printed the numbers and colored dots on the cards. These 40 cards can be ordered from Mark Strivings. See *Books and Supplies*. Of course, you can still make your own symbol cards.

Pre-Show Work

I place the 16 cards from **Stack A** face down. I add the 8 short cards face down on the top of this stack. I place the 16 cards in **Stack B** face down on the short cards.

I place **two or three** rubber bands around the cards. The last thing I want to happen is to have the cards fall out of order.

I put this deck into a 6- by 9-inch padded envelope. I made a printed label for the envelope that reads **Mega-Memory Practice Kit**. This allows me to introduce the deck as something a person might actually buy to build his or her memory.

I place the envelope with the cards on one of my tables.

Performance and Patter

I've discovered that to present many of these demonstrations successfully, I need to exercise my mind each day. To exercise my mind, I'm currently using a gift given to me by a friend of mine who teaches a class on Memory Skills. He calls it his Mega-Memory Practice Kit. It consists of 48 different cards that can be arranged in a practically infinite number of sequences to exercise your mind.

Note: This routine uses only 40 cards, but I want to create the illusion that 48 cards are involved.

I take the entire set of cards out of the envelope. Holding the cards face down in my left hand, I cut above the **short cards** and show the audience the bottom card of the **B Stack**.

Each card has a colored dot, so, to exercise your mind, you can mix the cards, look at a stack of cards, and try to memorize just the colors. Each card also has a number, so another simple way to exercise your mind is to mix the cards, look at a stack, and try to remember the numbers. And each card also has a drawing, so another way to exercise your mind is to mix the cards, look at a stack, and try to memorize the drawings.

Tonight, I will attempt to memorize all three: the colors... the numbers... and the drawings.

As I make these statements, I take about half of **Stack B** and hand it to a person on my right and I give the remainder of **Stack B** to a second person on my right. Then, as I walk to the left side of the audience, I flip over the stack so

the drawings are face up, I hand a third person about half of the face-up **Stack A**. I give the remainder of **Stack A** to a fourth person.

I retain the stack of **short cards**.

Please mix your cards as I'm doing. To make this demonstration more difficult, I will place these 7 or 8 remaining cards back in the envelope. This actually makes the memorization I will attempt more difficult because I won't know what cards are missing from the set of 48 cards.

This is not true, but it disguises the method.

I ask the first person (on my right) to hand his or her cards to the second person and then ask that person to mix the cards further. I do the same with the third and fourth persons (on my left).

Key Point: At this point, it is critical to **collect and false shuffle** the drawings. Bob Cassidy emphasized that the false shuffling is absolutely necessary to disguise the methodology. I agree with Bob. Since I have minimal card handling skills, here's what I do to create the illusion of mixing the cards.

I walk over to the person on my left and ask for his or her cards. This is **Stack A**. I place these (face down) on my left hand. As I walk back to my right, I Hindu Shuffle **Stack A**.

As I finish mixing **Stack A**, I use my thumb to pull a few of the top cards toward me to create an in-jog. With my right hand, I take the remaining cards—**Stack B**—and place them (face down) on the cards in my left hand. I also get a

break using the fatty part of my palm (the part of my palm closest to my thumb).

Now for the one card move: I take the cards above the break (and the in-jog) and do a Hindu Shuffle with these cards. I'm re-shuffling only **Stack B**.

And now one final mixing. So we start this demonstration with a stack of about 40 cards mixed by one, two, three, four, five people.

Now for the hard part. I will attempt to memorize as many cards as I can. Would someone with a second hand on his or her watch please time me. Beginning when I say "Go," I will try to memorize as many cards as I can. (Pause.) Go!

Looking at the **bottom of the stack** of 32 cards, I slowly count off the first 16 cards (**Stack A**). I take about 15 seconds. I hold these 16 cards in my right hand.

How long did that take?

Often I will get several different times, which can be used as an opportunity for humor. I walk into the right side of the audience and hand these 16 cards to someone to hold. I have just given this person **Stack A** to hold.

Now for the hard part, I will try to memorize all of the remaining cards without forgetting the cards I've already seen. Who is my timer this time? Tell me when to start.

When the person says "start," I look carefully at each of the remaining cards. I make it look difficult. I take about 20 seconds. When I'm done, I ask how long I took. Now I walk to the left side of the audience and hand

these cards to another person. This person has **Stack B**. I invite both people with cards onto the stage and introduce myself to each person.

Note: As I face the audience, the person with **Stack A** is on my right and the person with **Stack B** is on my left.

I need each of you to sort your cards by the colored dots. Group all the cards with red dots together. Same for the blue dots. Same for the green and yellow dots. Don't let me see the cards.

Key Point: As this sorting is being done, it is critical to fill this **dead time**. To fill this time, I talk about the visualization techniques I use to memorize the cards. What I say is not true, but it sounds believable. I suggest you check Bob Cassidy's book or videotape to get ideas for developing your own presentation. (See "Books and Supplies.")

Have you each sorted your cards by colors? Thank you.

*I will start by trying to call out the numbers and pictures of the cards with the red dots. Please look at only the cards with the red dots. If I correctly remember the number or drawing on a card you are holding, please **show it to the audience and then place it in my hand**.*

I will step closer to the audience so I can't see the cards you are holding. Ralph (the person on my right), I remember seeing only three red dots in the stack you are holding... is that correct? I believe you have the card with the #9 on it... a circle with a triangle inside it... is that correct?

Show it to the audience and place it in my hand. You also have the #6 card, the heart... and the #3 card, the triangle? Please put those in my hand.

As I call the cards, I emphasize **showing** the audience each card so the audience will know I am correct. I call the cards in this order to disguise the relationship between the #3 and triangle.

Sue, you have five cards with red dots... is that correct? You have the #1 card, the table... the #2 card, the arrow... the #4 card, the book... and the #5 card, the ladder. Am I correct? One last card... I always have trouble remembering this card. It's the card with an eye... #7. Am I correct?

I continue by calling out the numbers and drawings of cards with the blue dots, green dots, and yellow dots.

I vary which person I work with first for the remaining colors. I call out some numbers in a set from lowest to highest; others I call out from highest to lowest. This makes it more amazing.

At the end of the routine, I have all the cards in my hands. No mess. I thank the people on stage and take a bow.

Final Comments

- It took only five performances to become comfortable with the memory work needed to do this routine. And, if I do make a mistake, it makes the routine appear more believable.

- The routine is a wonderful stand-alone demonstration for an MC.

- I don't use this routine in shows under 30 minutes. In a short show, I prefer to use demonstrations that are shorter in length and also higher up Pascal's Pyramid of Believability.

- Some mentalists use this demonstration as an opener because it seems very believable. I don't use it as an opener because I believe it consumes too much time (9–12 minutes). I normally open with "Einstein's Demise," which runs only 4–5 minutes, or "Learning the Almost Impossible," which runs about 8 minutes. Some performers use this demonstration as an encore. Again, there are no absolutes. It's very strong no matter where you use it.

- If you like this demonstration, turn a few pages to my **Mega-Memory Kicker**... an easy way to make this demonstration even stronger.

Hickok's Memory System: 32 Symbol Cards from Mark Strivings

Colors: I arrange the colors from shortest (3 letters, red) to longest (6 letters, yellow)

Drawings: In some sets, the first letters of the drawings spell a word associated with the color. In sets not using word sets, the drawings (not the shapes) are in alphabetical order

Geometric Shapes: The two triangles, the two Xs, and the two squares are in the same set. The shape is always the first card of the set. The same shape inside another shape is always the last card of the set

Numbering System: In some sets, all numbers end with a 1, 2, 4, 5, or 7. In the other sets, all numbers end with a 3, 6, or 9. The four numbers that end with zero (10, 20, 30, and 40) are sometimes included in the latter sets

STACK B

RED DOTS

First letters of drawings spell TABLE

1. Table
2. Arrow
4. Ball
5. Ladder
7. Eye

BLUE DOTS

Cross is the key. All shapes are 'crosses'. Drawings begin with the letter C

16. X (Roman Number 10. Always cross)
12. Chair
16. Cross
19. Cap
20. X inside a square

GREEN DOTS

Green for garden. The drawings are things you would find in a garden.

31. Square
32. Flower
34. Path
35. Tree
37. Squash inside a circle

YELLOW DOTS

43. Question Mark

STACK A

RED DOTS

Three is the key. Only 3 items, all three-sided.

3. Triangle
6. Pent (5 sides). Like a triangle, three is ready
9. Triangle inside a circle

BLUE DOTS

First letters spell HOUSE. "House of Blues" may help connect blue and house.

21. House
22. O (circle symbol looks like an O)
24. Umbrella
25. Star
27. Empty beer bottle

GREEN DOTS

Green for CASH. Drawings spell CASH.

30. Cent symbol
33. American Flag
36. S Dollar sign (Circles like S)
39. Half Moon

YELLOW DOTS

Drawings spell BOYS.

41. Balloons
42. Old Key
44. Yacht (boat)
45. Six-sided Coin

Mega-Memory Kicker

Once you are comfortable performing Mega-Memory Miracle, I strongly encourage you to add this extra demonstration to make your performance even more amazing.

What the Audience Sees:

After naming all the cards held by the two people on the stage, the performer names the drawings that are being held by an audience member.

Background and Philosophy

During the standard demonstration, I place the eight **short cards** back into the envelope as the people are shuffling their cards.

One day, while performing this demonstration for a group, someone from the audience asked if I could name the cards in the envelope that were not used. The first time I was asked the question, I couldn't. But now I can.

This makes a strong demonstration even stronger. And it is very easy.

Method

All you need to do is memorize the eight short cards.

Three Bonus Demonstrations

Here are the keys to remembering the eight short cards. Since this phase is added to the standard routine, I start the set with a plus sign (+) and end the set with a plus sign within a circle.

The **first letters of the remaining drawings** spell "Chucks."

The number 8 is used for the first time. The numbers start with 8 and 18 and I end with 48. The remaining numbers use numbers ending with 3, 6, or 9.

Red Dot	8	+	(Plus sign)
Blue Dot	18	C	ar
Blue Dot	23	H	at
Blue Dot	26	U	rn
Blue Dot	29	C	lock
Yellow Dot	43	K	ite
Yellow Dot	46	S	un
Yellow Dot	48	⊕	(Plus sign inside a circle)

Additions to Performance and Patter

After giving out **Stack A** and **Stack B** for mixing, I take the eight short cards and hand them to a person in the middle of the front row of the audience.

Please mix these cards for me.

I collect and shuffle **Stack A** and **Stack B**, and begin the standard demonstration as described.

However, after I name all the drawings on the cards with the **red dots**, I change my presentation.

*One of the things that make this demonstration extremely difficult is that "I'm not playing with a full deck." By that I mean this gentleman (point to the person with the **short cards**) is holding 7, 8, or 9 cards he took from the middle of deck. Because I'm not using all 48 cards, I truly did need to memorize both stacks of cards. If I did use all 48 cards, I could just memorize the first 24 cards I saw and—by the process of elimination—I could name the other 24 cards.*

For those paying really close attention today, you will notice the #8 card wasn't mentioned yet. That means—by elimination—it must be with this gentleman.

I again point to the person with the **short cards**.

*Please look through the drawings and see if you can find the #8 card. Am I correct? I believe it has a **plus sign**. Show everyone the drawing. Please sort the remaining cards by color. I will return to you in a few minutes.*

I return to my standard presentation. I name the drawings and numbers on the cards with the blue, green, and yellow dots held by helpers.

I thank each of the participants, and ask them to return to their seats.

There is another way to use this Memory Deck to exercise your mind. Pick up ten to twenty cards, and memorize the drawings. Then remove two or three cards randomly. Now, pick up the remaining cards, look at the drawings

again, and try to determine—by elimination—which cards are missing.

Since I've named both sets of drawings correctly, let's see if I can test my memory skills and—by elimination—name the cards not mentioned yet. These would be the cards that were taken out earlier and are now being held by someone in the audience. This is the toughest part. Who has those cards?

*I've already mentioned that the #8 card—the card with the plus sign—wasn't selected. I also believe that four cards with **blue dots** weren't selected today. If I name a card correctly, shout out "**hallelujah**." (This can be skipped, but it adds an opportunity for some humor.) The cards with blue dots not called out yet are #18, a car. (Wait for a "**hallelujah**." Encourage the person to be enthusiastic.) #23, the hat... #26, the urn... and #29, the clock. Am I correct?*

*All the drawings with green dots were used today. That means the last three cards have **yellow dots**. #43, the kite... #46, the sun, and—if I'm right on the last card, let's hear one last loud "**hallelujah**"—#48, a plus sign in a circle.*

As I call out these eight cards, I walk closer and closer to the person. When I call the last card, I'm standing next to the person and ready to take back the cards.

Collect these cards and take a bow.

Appendix

Final Comments

- If you are not performing a memory demonstration, consider this one, which I believe is as good as it gets. It takes some work, but it is a very impressive and believable demonstration of your enhanced memory skills.
- If you are currently doing a memory demonstration with playing cards, you already know how strong this demonstration plays. I believe your act will be stronger if you switch away from playing cards. But, again, there are no absolutes.

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Item 1: Confirmation Letter

April 29, 2002

CONFIRMATION LETTER

Dear Carl,

This letter will summarize my understanding concerning my performance at your event.

Date: Feb. 16, 2002
 Time: About 8:15 PM
 Length: 45 minutes
 Location: Embassy Suites, Airport
 Fee: \$XXXX plus travel expenses
 Audience: About 90 people... mostly sales people
 Format: I will demonstrate the "Untapped Powers of the Human Mind."

Please use this description in your printed materials: "Chuck Hickok has traveled the world, helping people better understand and use the untapped powers of the human mind. You will be surprised and amazed by what you see and hear during this unique entertainment experience."

Also attached is my Introduction. Please make sure that the person who introduces me reads my Introduction out loud a few times before introducing me.

Call with any other questions or concerns. I am excited to help you make this event a success!

Sincerely,

Chuck Hickok

President

Item 2: Presentation Requirements

PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Chuck Hickok

Cordless lavalier microphone

Two small tables (each about 3 feet by 3 feet)

Flip chart stand (with a solid back) and pad of paper

Pitcher of water and glass

The lighting should be sufficient so that I can be seen by the audience **without a flood light or spot light**.

If the audience size is over 100 people, an 8' x 12' platform about 12" inches off the floor may be necessary.

It is critical that I can walk into the audience, and that audience members can easily join me.

I will not need a podium, and prefer a stage **without a podium**, or a podium that can be **easily moved** to the back of the stage when I begin.

Item 3: Introduction

Each year we try to do something at this event to make it different, interesting, and exciting.

Our search this year led us to **Chuck Hickok**.

Chuck Hickok is a well-known speaker and author, who specializes in exploring the untapped powers of the mind.

Tonight Chuck will discuss and demonstrate some untapped mental abilities he believes we all have.

I recently learned that Chuck has three of the highest awards given out by the Midwest Performer's Association... all of which, I also learned, he bought on eBay.

LET'S WELCOME... CHUCK HICKOK!

Item 4: Checklist

This is my checklist for the six demonstrations described in Chapters Four through Nine of this book. It is always in my carrying case. I review it before each show.

In Coat

- ☐ Mints
- ☐ Postcards
- ☐ Newspaper Article and Scissors
- ☐ Way-Ahead Envelope

On Flip Chart

- ☐ Grid for Einstein's Demise
- ☐ Jumbo Marker
- ☐ Regular Markers
- ☐ Extra Strips of Tape to Hang Banner

On Wall or Flip Chart

- ☐ Banner

On Tables

- ☐ Five Multiple-Out Envelopes
- ☐ Five Pieces of Cardboard and Five Markers
- ☐ Certificates
- ☐ Drawing Pad and Markers
- ☐ Six Books Inside a Bookstore Bag
- ☐ Ballpoint Pen and Index Card

Item 5: "Einstein's Demise" Handout

Mathematical texts are filled with many ways to do this impressive demonstration of rapid math. The method below is often used to help people develop their mental abilities. It requires memorization and the ability to do nineteen simple mathematical calculations in your mind. It can be learned, but requires real effort.

Step One: Memorize the numbers that make up the square below. It adds up to 34. This is your memorized square.

13	2	11	8
12	7	14	1
6	9	4	15
3	16	5	10

Step Two: Ask for a number between 34 and 90. In this example, 57 is the selected number.

Step Three: In your mind, subtract 34 from the selected number ($57 - 34 = 23$).

Step Four: In your mind, divide this number (23) by 4. In this example you will get 5 with a remainder of 3. 5 will become your **Alpha** number in this example. Add the remainder (3) to your **Alpha** number (5) to calculate your **Beta** Number. 8 will be your **Beta** number in this example.

Step Five: To create a square for the selected number 57, you then do the following:

Add the **Alpha** number (5) to each number from 1 to 12 in your memorized square. Below is an example of the square for 57 after 5 is added to the numbers 1 to 12.

...	7	16	13
7	12	...	6
11	14	9	...
8	...	10	15

Add the **Beta** number (8) to the numbers 13, 14, 15, and 16 in your memorized square. Below is the completed square for 57 after 8 is added to 13, 14, 15, and 16.

21	7	16	13
12	12	22	6
11	14	9	23
8	24	10	15

Step Six: Practice, Practice, Practice. To do this demonstration in a fun, amazing way, you must practice the math until little effort is required. Never do this demonstration more than twice in a row; it will expose your method and make your abilities seem less amazing.

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www.ChuckHickok.com. (800) 677-8337

For more ideas on rapid mathematics, read
Mathmagics by Arthur Benjamin and Michael Shermer.

Item 6: "Learning the Almost Impossible" Handout

People often fail to grow and develop because they give up on their own abilities. New tasks and assignments are automatically seen as too difficult to master. To move closer to the things you want, you must first *believe you have the capability to change*. Then, acquiring the things you want normally involves:

exposure to new knowledge or finding shortcuts (The Secrets of the Successful)

and then immediately practicing what you have learned (Risk Taking)

Without immediate, frequent practice, a person will forget what he or she is trying to learn.

The secret or shortcut to learning to say the alphabet backward is creating a **mnemonic** (memory aid). A mnemonic is a *personal, fun, logical way* of remembering something difficult.

To say the alphabet backward, the **mnemonic** I use involves remembering four sentences that relate to a strange, hard-to-forget story/scene I picture in my mind.

I begin by picturing a hundred-year-old, ex-Viking warrior named Zeewhy. Zeewhy's hobby is collecting cute baby alligators. Zeewhy is being sent to the store with a coupon for free milk to feed his cute baby alligators. Being a hundred years old, he can barely see what's written on the coupon he is holding... or remember why he is going to the store. Zeewhy asks his wife, "Vut's our coupon for?" She says, "Milk jug(s) to feed the cute baby alligators."

To say the alphabet backward, remember these sentences as your **mnemonic** for the letters.

Zeewhy (the) ex-warrior (asks)... z, y, x, w (Sound & First letters)

"Vut's our coupon (for)?"... v, u, t, s, r, q, p, o, n (Sound)

[Answer] "Milk jug(s)..." m, l, k, j, i, h, g (Spelling & Sound)

(to) feed (the) cute baby alligators... f, e, d, c, b, a (Spelling & First Letters)

If you begin with this strange picture in your mind and then practice saying these four sentences out loud, you can learn to say the alphabet backward in the next five minutes.

Key Point: This strange secret (the mnemonic) may help you quickly teach yourself to do something you didn't initially believe you could learn... *but without regular practice for about 10 days, the skill will soon be lost.* (To practice, write the alphabet backward on a Post-It note and place the Post-It note where you see it every day.)

Once mastered, only occasional practice will be necessary to do something that others find almost impossible.

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Item 7: Certificate

Certificate Of Achievement

This will certify to all persons that the bearer is an

EXPERT TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATOR

and is entitled to all rights and privileges
granted to such persons.

This person has demonstrated superior telepathic ability
and is licensed to practice telepathy in places and locations
where minds await to be influenced.

Midwest Mindreading University
St. Paul, Minnesota

Granted by Chuck Hickok, D.P.S.
Director of Applied Research

Item 8: Books and Supplies

Books and publications mentioned in this book:

Joseph Atmore, *Dunninger's Brain Busters*, H & R
Magic Books, www.magicbookshop.com

Banachek, *Psychological Subtleties*, Magic Inspira-
tions, www.magicinspirations.net

Bob Cassidy, *Art of Mentalism*, Collector's Work-
shop, www.vikingmagic.com

Bob Cassidy, *Art of Mentalism II*,
mastermindreader.com/cd/

Randy Charach, *Secrets of a Millionaire Magician*,
randy@charach.com

David Dee, *Marketing Secrets* (Call 1-888-667-
1657 for a free tape.)

Doug Dymont, *Mindsights*, www.oratory.com

Karl Fulves, *Self Working Number Magic*, Dover
Press, www.doverpublications.com

Mark Strivings, *Before the Curtain Rises*,
markyapril@aol.com

T.A. Waters, *Mind, Myth and Magick*,
www.hermeticpress.com